EVIL DEAD 2
TALES of the EX-MORTIS
VOLUME ONE COLLECTED EDITION
THIRTY YEARS
ED2
30
87
17
OF EVIL DEAD 2

EVIL DEAD 2™

TALES of the EX-MORTIS

SOUL POWER

JUSTIN PENISTON
WRITER

ENZA FONTANA
LINEART

DAVI COMODO
COLORS-PT.1

HOUSE OF IMAGI
COLORS-PT.2,3

JACOB BASCLE
LETTERS

THE LOTTERY

FRANK HANNAH
WRITER

GABRIEL REARTE
PENCILS

CARLOS EDUARDO
INKS-PT.1

DAVI COMODO
COLORS-PT.1

ROB LEAN/AUSTIN JANOWSKI
INKS-PT.2

HOUSE OF IMAGI
COLORS-PT.2

JACOB BASCLE
LETTERS

CAMP DESERTED / SAY YOUR PRAYERS

GEORGIA BALL
WRITER

EDUARDO GARCIA
PENCILS

CHRIS SUMMERS
COLORS

JACOB BASCLE
LETTERS

SPACE GOAT PUBLISHING

SHON C. BURY
PRESIDENT & PUBLISHER

DAVE OLBRICH
SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT

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EDITOR

TAYLOR SMITH
ASSISTANT EDITOR

JACOB BASCLE
PRODUCTION & DESIGN

DEADITE MAN WALKING

IVAN COHEN
WRITER

PERICLES "PJ" JUNIOR
PENCILS

CHRIS SUMMERS
COLORS

JACOB BASCLE
LETTERS

SCREAM QUEEN

JEFF MARIOTTE/MARSHEILA ROCKWELL
WRITERS

CLIFF RICHARDS
LINEART

HOUSE OF IMAGI
COLORS

JACOB BASCLE
LETTERS

DAS BOOK

FRANK HANNAH
WRITER

ALAN QUAH
LINEART

HOUSE OF IMAGI
COLORS

JACOB BASCLE
LETTERS

COVER ART BY YVEL GUICHET & PATRICK BLAINE
ADDITIONAL INTERIOR/BACK COVER ART BY DAVE YOUKOVICH

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MEDIA RELATIONS – JD Boucher – JD@spacegoatproductions.com

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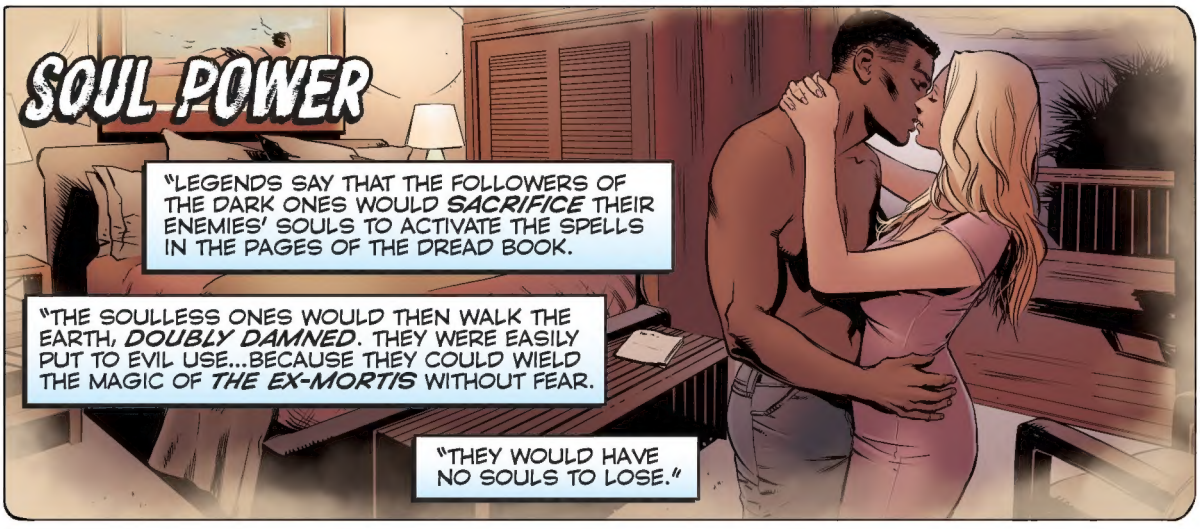
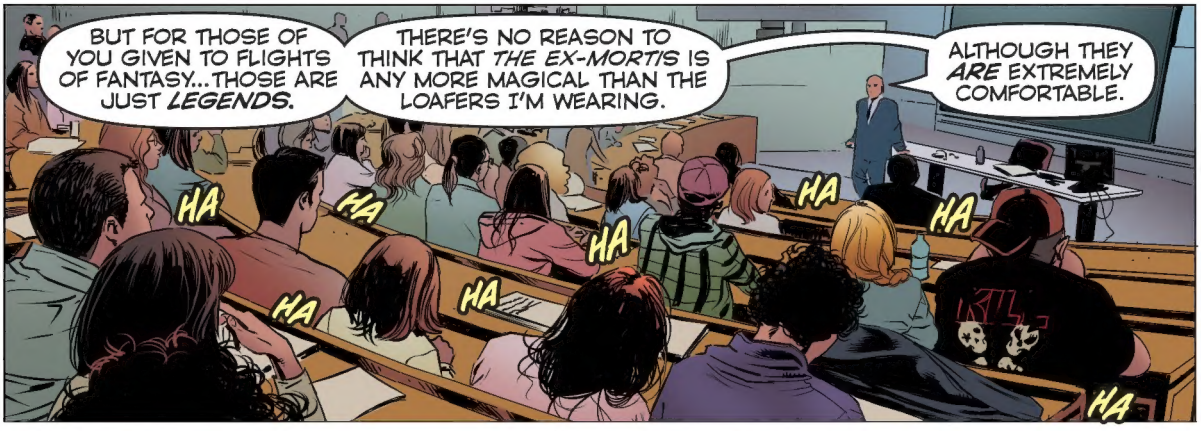
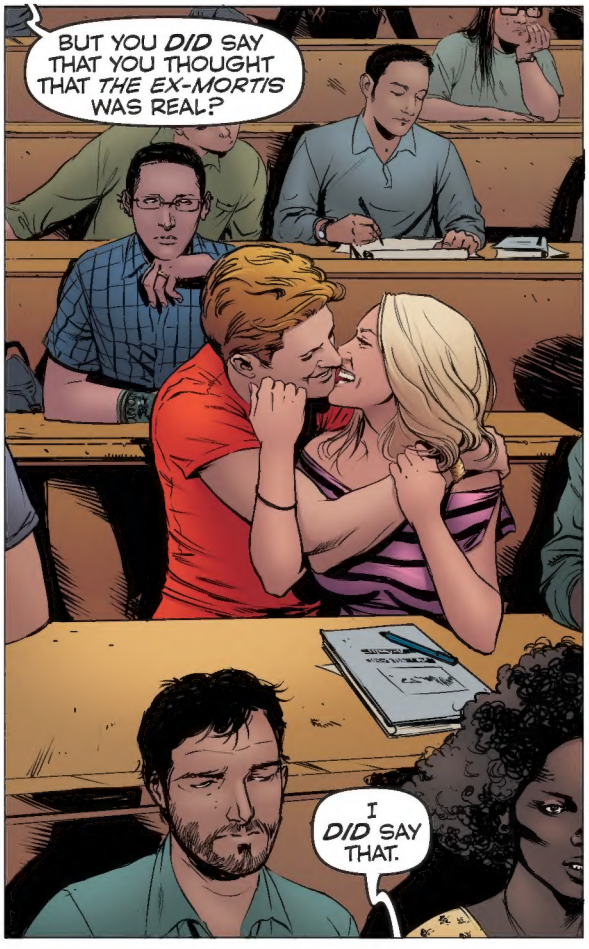
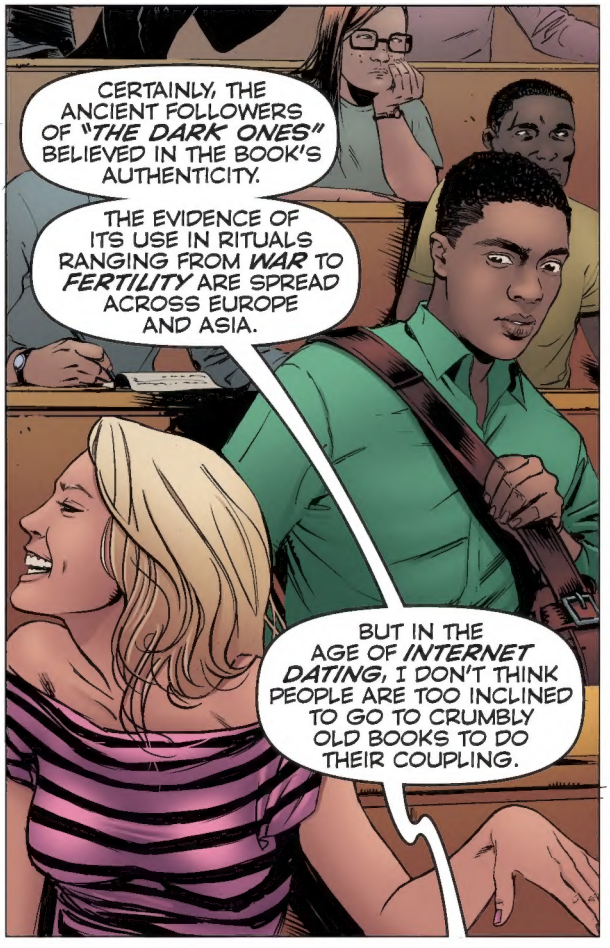
OH, HELLO! I'M CERTAINLY SURPRISED TO SEE YOU HERE. AFTER ALL, YOU'RE A DECENT PERSON AND THE BOOK YOU'RE HOLDING IS ONE OF THE MOST EVIL TOMES EVER TO SEE PRINT!
OF COURSE I'M AT THE VERY TIP-TOP OF THAT LIST. BUT THIS COLLECTION IS STILL PRETTY EVIL. I'D SAY IT LANDS SOMEWHERE BETWEEN TWENTY AND THIRTY IN THE TOP FORTY-FIVE MOST EVIL BOOKS OF ALL TIME. THAT'S PRETTY GOOD FOR A COMIC!
IN ANY CASE, GOOD FOR YOU FOR PICKING IT UP! I THINK YOU'RE GOING TO LIKE WHAT YOU READ. WE'VE GOT STORIES ABOUT DEMONIC PROFESSORS, DEMONIC MUMMIES, DEMONIC CAMP COUNSELORS, AND EVEN DEMONIC FORMER BEAUTY QUEENS.
AND TO THINK--ALL THEIR DEMONIC EVIL WAS INSPIRED BY LITTLE OL' ME! CRAZY, RIGHT?
SO I HOPE YOU ENJOY THE EVIL TALES THAT FOLLOW AND REMEMBER TO BUY A FEW EXTRA COPIES FOR ALL YOUR FRIENDS AND ENEMIES!
HEY, BUDDY! EASE UP ON THE SPINE!


SOUL POWER
"LEGENDS SAY THAT THE FOLLOWERS OF THE DARK ONES WOULD SACRIFICE THEIR ENEMIES' SOULS TO ACTIVATE THE SPELLS IN THE PAGES OF THE DREAD BOOK.
"THE SOULLESS ONES WOULD THEN WALK THE EARTH, DOUBLY DAMNED. THEY WERE EASILY PUT TO EVIL USE...BECAUSE THEY COULD WIELD THE MAGIC OF THE EX-MORTIS WITHOUT FEAR.
"THEY WOULD HAVE NO SOULS TO LOSE."


BUT FOR THOSE OF YOU GIVEN TO FLIGHTS OF FANTASY...THOSE ARE JUST LEGENDS.
THERE'S NO REASON TO THINK THAT THE EX-MORTIS IS ANY MORE MAGICAL THAN THE LOAFERS I'M WEARING.
ALTHOUGH THEY ARE EXTREMELY COMFORTABLE.
HA
HA
HA
HA
HA
HA
HA


BUT YOU DID SAY THAT YOU THOUGHT THAT THE EX-MORTIS WAS REAL?
I DID SAY THAT.

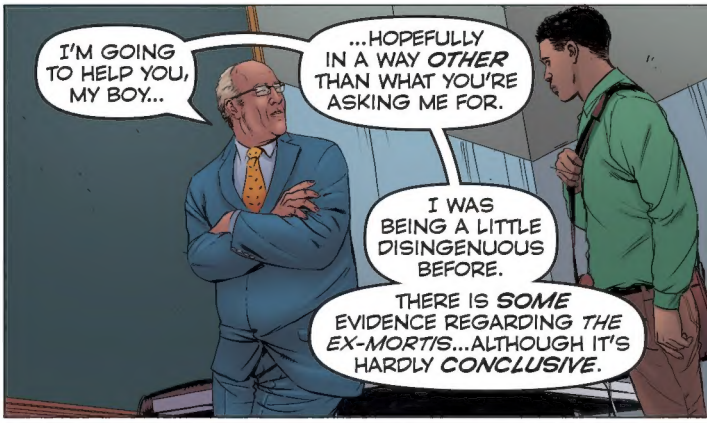

CERTAINLY, THE ANCIENT FOLLOWERS OF "THE DARK ONES" BELIEVED IN THE BOOK'S AUTHENTICITY.
THE EVIDENCE OF ITS USE IN RITUALS RANGING FROM WAR TO FERTILITY ARE SPREAD ACROSS EUROPE AND ASIA.
BUT IN THE AGE OF INTERNET DATING, I DON'T THINK PEOPLE ARE TOO INCLINED TO GO TO CRUMBLY OLD BOOKS TO DO THEIR COUPLING.

PROFESSOR KNOWBY?
MISTER... SIMMONS, RIGHT?
WHAT CAN I DO FOR MY ONLY 'A' STUDENT?
FASCINATING STUFF, ISN'T IT?
ABOUT THE EX-MORTIS--
IT REALLY IS, ALTHOUGH I GUESS ANYTHING WITH SUCH AN EVOCATIVE NAME AND SUCH A...
...BLOODY REPUTATION?
YEAH.
ANYTHING LIKE THAT IS BOUND TO CAPTURE THE IMAGINATION.
DO YOU REALLY--?
THINK IT'S REAL? I DEFINITELY DO.
BUT I'M NOT ONE TO BE DETERRED BY THINGS LIKE LACK OF EVIDENCE OR COMMON SENSE.
Which is why I became an educator, I suppose.
"LACK OF EVIDENCE?" YOU MEAN--
THERE'S A LOT OF MENTION OF THE EX-MORTIS IN THE ANNALS OF THE PAST, JUST AS THERE WAS OF THE HANGING GARDENS OF BABYLON.
NO ONE EVER FOUND THEM, EITHER.
BUT WE CONTINUE TO BELIEVE IN MAGIC, YOU KNOW? WE HAVE TO.
EVEN EVERYDAY MAGIC STILL CATCHES OUR EYE AND SEIZES OUR ATTENTION. EVERYDAY MAGIC HAS THE POWER TO MAKE LIVES...AND TO BREAK THEM.
WHEN WE STOP TO THINK ABOUT WHAT WE COULD ACCOMPLISH WITH MAGIC THAT IS MORE THAN EVERYDAY, ONCE IN A LIFETIME MAGIC...
...WELL, THE VERY THOUGHT IS INTOXICATING.
DON'T YOU AGREE?
...WHAT?
PRECISELY MY POINT.
WHAT EXACTLY CAN I DO FOR YOU, MR. SIMMONS?

PROFESSOR... I WANT...I NEED...
YOU'RE NOT SERIOUSLY ASKING ME IF I KNOW WHERE TO FIND IT?
NO!
Yes.

SON, I KNOW I WAS WAXING POETIC ABOUT THE ALLURE OF MAGIC...BUT YOU DON'T WANT TO DO THIS!
THE BEST CASE SCENARIO HAS YOU SPENDING TIME AND MONEY ON AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL SNIPE HUNT.
AND AT WORST, YOU GET EXACTLY WHAT YOU THINK YOU WANT-- A RUN OF THE MILL CO-ED ENSORCELED BY THE BLACKEST OF MAGIC.

THERE IS NOTHING "RUN OF THE MILL" ABOUT BRITTANY. SHE IS PERFECTION.
SHE CAST HER SPELL ON ME THE MOMENT I LAID EYES ON HER. IT'S ONLY FAIR I RETURN THE FAVOR.
ARE YOU GOING TO HELP ME OR NOT?


I'M GOING TO HELP YOU, MY BOY...
...HOPEFULLY IN A WAY OTHER THAN WHAT YOU'RE ASKING ME FOR.
I WAS BEING A LITTLE DISINGENUOUS BEFORE.
THERE IS SOME EVIDENCE REGARDING THE EX-MORTIS...ALTHOUGH IT'S HARDLY CONCLUSIVE.

TO GET TO IT, YOU'LL HAVE TO GAIN THE CONFIDENCE OF THE PROFESSOR WHO TAUGHT ME, LUCILLE MILTON...

"...BUT BELIEVE ME, THAT'S EASIER SAID THAN DONE."
YOU'RE WHO, NOW?
MY NAME IS DON SIMMONS. I'M A STUDENT OF RAYMOND KNOWBY'S... AND HE RECOMMENDED THAT I SPEAK TO PROFESSOR MILTON.
IS HE AWARE OF HER CONDITION?
WELL, HE SENT ME HERE...ALBEIT WITH A LOT OF CAVEATS. I UNDERSTAND THAT SHE'S NOT WELL.
"NOT WELL" IS SCHIZOPHRENIA. WE DON'T EVEN KNOW WHAT TO CALL PROFESSOR MILTON'S CONDITION.
SHE SUFFERS FROM MASSIVE DELUSIONS AND HALLUCINATIONS. SHE'S A DANGER TO HERSELF AND TO OTHERS. SHE DOES THINGS...THAT ARE HARD TO EXPLAIN.
YOU'VE SIGNED THE WAIVERS, AND HER FAMILY'S INSTRUCTIONS DO INCLUDE A DISPENSATION FOR STUDENTS...BUT BE CAREFUL.
LUCKY FOR YOU...SHE'S JUST HAD HER BATH.

I'LL GIVE YOU SOME PRIVACY, BUT ATTENDANTS WILL BE RIGHT DOWN THE HALL IF YOU NEED ANYTHING.
UM... PROFESSOR MILTON?
PROFESSOR MILTON?
MY NAME IS DON SIMMONS... PROFESSOR KNOWBY SENT ME?
HE TOLD ME THAT YOU HAD GONE LOOKING FOR... THE EX-MORTIS?
PROFESSOR MILTON?
RAYMOND KNOWBY! HOW IS THAT OLD SO-AND-SO?
I'LL JUST BET HE'S ABSOLUTELY DELICIOUS.

LEAVING SO SOON, SUGAR?
NO... WHAT'S WRONG WITH...
THUD
SUMH!?
I THOUGHT RAY-RAY SENT YOU WITH QUESTIONS!
AND I GET SO FEW VISITORS!
HOW... HOW DO THEY NOT KNOW WHAT YOU ARE?!
SIMPLE, SIMON! THEY DON'T KNOW THE MAGIC WORD!
WHAT'S THE MAGIC WORD, LOVER?
AAAGGGGHHH!! PLEASE!!
KRAK

NO, SUGAR-BOOGER, NO!!
TELL MAMA THE MAGIC WORD!! YOU SAID IT BEFORE!!
EX-MORTIS.
THE MAGIC WORD IS EX-MORTIS...AND YOU'RE GONNA TELL ME WHERE TO FIND IT.
OWWOOOOO!!
DING-DING-DING!!!
BRASS BALLS AND MAGIC WORDS!!
BUT I CAN'T TELL YOU WHAT I DON'T KNOW!!
I DON'T KNOW WHERE THE EX-MORTIS IS...AND NEITHER DOES LUCY!
ONLY THE EX-MORTIS HAS THE MAGIC WE NEED TO GET FREE!!!
"Lucy?" You mean--
DID YOU HONESTLY THINK THAT OLD LUCY WAS BORN WITH THIS FACE, HONEY CHILD?!
THE LOVELY PROFESSOR IS JUST FOUR WALLS AND A LOCKED DOOR, AND YOU, LOVER BOY...YOU'RE THE KEY!!
HAHA HA HAAH HAA HA HA!

YOU GIVE A COUPLE OF OLD GALS HOPE! THERE ARE STILL NICE GUYS OUT THERE!!
OH NO...OH NO...
YOU'RE GONNA HELP US OUTTA THIS, AREN'T YOU SNUGGLE-BUNNY?
OF COURSE YOU ARE! YOU'RE GONNA DO IT FOR LOVE!!
I DON'T... EUHHHH...I DON'T...LOVE... YOU!
HAAAA HA HEE HA HA HAAA HEE
OF COURSE YOU DON'T, STUD-MUFFIN.
ALTHOUGH I COULD TURN YOU OUT IF ONLY YOU'D LET ME!
YOU'LL DO IT FOR THE LOVE OF WASPY LITTLE BRITTANY!

WHAT... WHAT DO YOU MEAN?
I MEAN THAT IF YOU DON'T FIND THE MAN WHO PUT ME IN HERE, THE MAN WHO HAS THE EX-MORTIS...
...I WILL CARVE MY NAME INTO YOUR PRETTY BRITTANY. BUT I'LL DIG A LOT DEEPER.
YOU'LL NEVER GET TO BRITTANY... THEY'LL NEVER LET YOU OUT OF HERE.
THEY'VE KEPT YOU HERE THIS LONG.

FIND HIM. FIND AFZAL ABD-APEP.
HE BURNED THE SIGILS FROM THE EX-MORTIS ONTO LUCILLE MILTON'S FLESH. HE TRAPPED ME IN THE WORLD OF MEN.
HE ALONE CAN SAVE YOUR BRITTANY...AND DELIVER HER TO YOU AS WELL.
THAT'S WHAT YOU CAME HERE FOR...RIGHT, MY CHOCOLATE STAR?

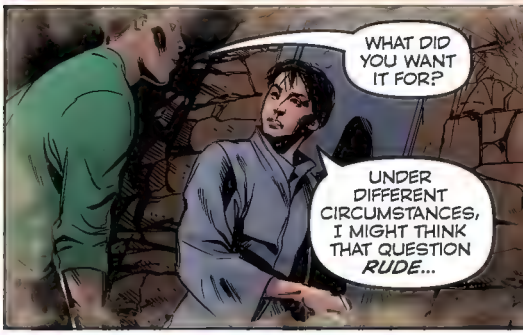
SOUL POWER
PART TWO
MUST YOU ALWAYS USE YOUR WOMEN FOR INTERROGATIONS?
GOD, NO.
BUT THEY TEND TO BE VERY EFFECTIVE ON SUBJECTS THAT JUST CAN'T GET LAID FOR WHATEVER REASON.
DOESN'T MATTER IF IT'S RELIGIOUS REPRESSION OR JUST BEING A LOSER.
I EVER TELL YOU YOU SOUND JUST LIKE MY MOTHER?
God, I hate you.
...SINGLE...
TWENTY-EIGHT YEARS OLD...
...PARENTS DECEASED...
...NO CHILDREN...
...NO SIBLINGS.
WHAT WOULD AN AMERICAN CITIZEN BE DOING IN BAGHDAD, IN THE HOME OF A MAN WHO SITS IN THE NUMBER TWO SPOT OF THE AGENCY'S TERRORIST WATCHLIST?
:SIGH:
SO, YOU ARE DONALD J. SIMMONS.
GRADUATE STUDENT FROM MISKATONIC ADVANCED DEGREE PROGRAM.
I DON'T... I DON'T UNDERSTAND.
I'M HERE ON A RESEARCH PROJECT... I'M JUST LOOKING FOR AN ARTIFACT...I NEED TO FIND AFZAL ABD-APEP--
"WELL, YOU'RE IN THE RIGHT PLACE. WE HAVE 'THE FAVORED SERVANT OF THE SERPENT' TWO FLOORS DOWN, GETTING THE SHIT...PERSUADED OUT OF HIM.
"HE'LL TALK ABOUT EVERYTHING HE'S EVER KNOWN BY THE TIME WE'RE DONE."
THANK GOD!
thankyou thankyouthank youthankyou thankyou!

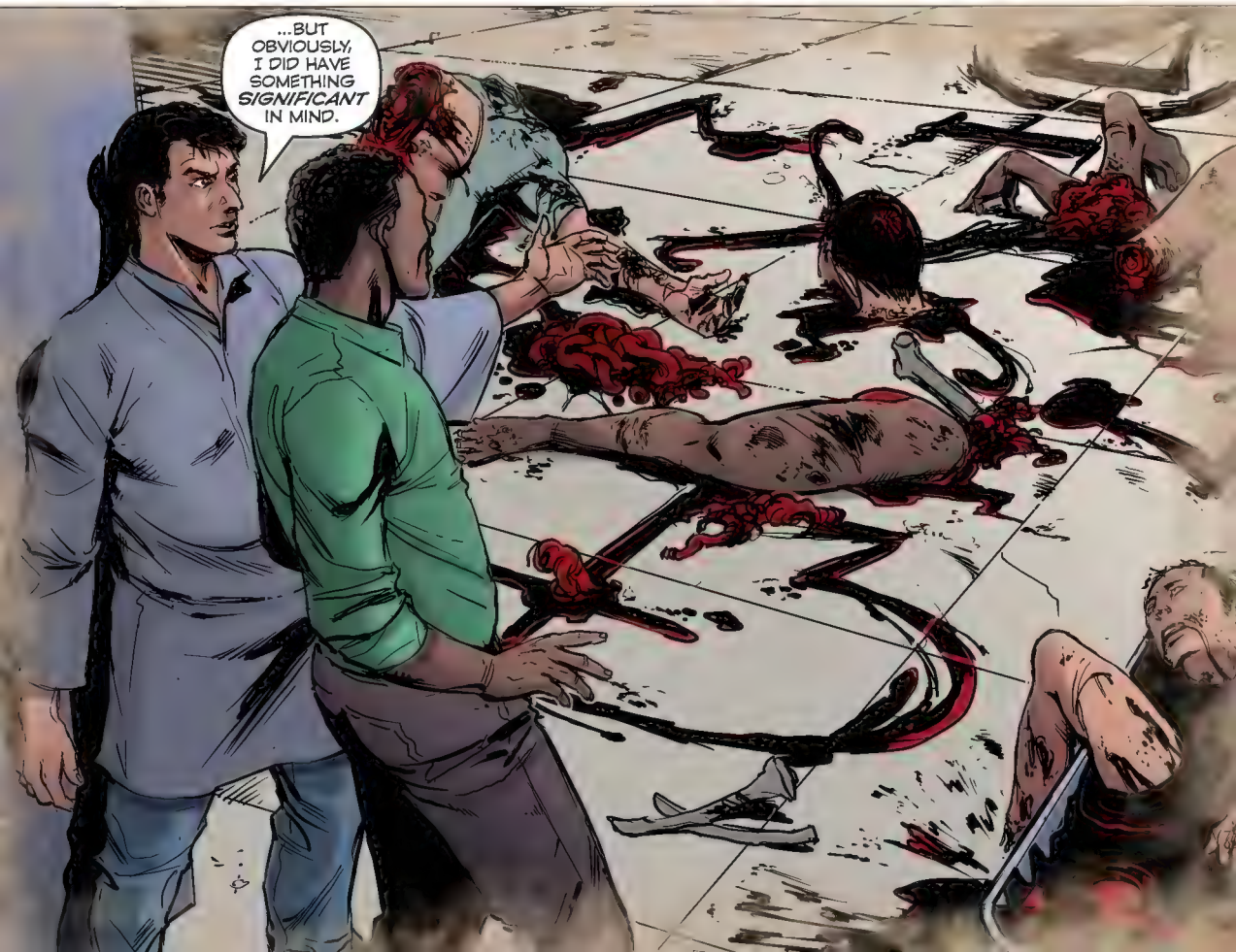
HUH.
ARE YOU BUYING THIS?
PERSONALLY, I DON'T THINK "BLACK GRADUATE STUDENT" PLAYS AS AN EFFECTIVE COVER. IT'S *SO* UNBELIEVABLE AS TO MAKE ME THINK THIS HAS TO BE REAL.
TELL ME ALL ABOUT IT. TELL ME EVERYTHING.
"YOU ARE THE *MOST* CONTEMPTIBLE KIND OF PERSON."
I DIDN'T COME HERE LOOKING FOR A TERRORIST, YOU *HAVE* TO BELIEVE ME!
"IF IT MAKES YOU FEEL BETTER, I DON'T LIKE YOU CAMEL-JOCKEYS, EITHER."
"YOU KNOW, THAT *DOES* MAKE ME FEEL BETTER."
I STUDY ARCHAEOLOGY AND ANTHROPOLOGY!
I WAS LOOKING FOR A DEALER IN *ANTIQUITIES!*
I *WANT* TO BELIEVE YOU, MR. SIMMONS, REALLY...
...BUT WE'VE DONE OUR HOMEWORK. CRACKING YOUR LAPTOP DIDN'T EXACTLY REQUIRE *ALAN TURING.*
YOU GOOGLED *"AFZAL ABD-APEP"* AND YOU CLICKED THROUGH TO SEE HIM ON *THE MOST WANTED LIST!*
YOU *KNEW* WHO YOU WERE GOING TO MEET!
NO, I DIDN'T! WHEN I SAW THE MOST WANTED LIST, I FIGURED IT HAD TO BE A DIFFERENT GUY!
WHO KNOWS HOW COMMON A NAME *"AFZAL"* IS? I GREW UP IN *LANSING!*
YOU EXPECT ME TO BELIEVE THAT?
IT'S TRUE!
SO WHEN DID YOU DISCOVER THAT YOU WERE DEALING WITH *"THAT"* AFZAL ABD-APEP?
THAT YOU WERE DEALING WITH A *TERRORIST?*
THAT'S EASY.
WHEN HE BEGAN TO TERRORIZE *ME.*

"THE SHOP WAS DIFFICULT TO FIND, AND IT WAS IN A... SKETCHY PART OF TOWN."
"ALL OF BAGHDAD IS SKETCHY."
"WELL, THAT SHOP IS A REALLY ROUGH SKETCH THEN."
IT IS WONDERFUL TO FINALLY MEET YOU, MY FRIEND!
UM... N-NICE TO MEET YOU TOO.
MAY I OFFER YOU REFRESHMENT?
NO, NO THANK YOU.
IT'S ALWAYS STRAIGHT TO BUSINESS WITH YOU AMERICANS, BUT--
WHERE ARE MY MANNERS? YOU'VE FLOWN A LONG WAY AND TRAVELED THROUGH A DARK AND MYSTERIOUS CITY TO DO BUSINESS WITH ME...
...WHAT EXACTLY IS IT THAT YOU ARE LOOKING FOR?
I'M LOOKING FOR THE EX-MORTIS. I'M LOOKING FOR THE BOOK OF THE DEAD.
I WAS TOLD YOU KNOW WHERE IT IS.
TELL ME, ARE YOU A COLLECTOR, A SCHOLAR...
...OR DO YOU INTEND ACTUALLY TO USE THE BOOK?
...
...THE EX-MORTIS HAS BEEN LOST FOR MANY YEARS!
WHOEVER HAS TOLD YOU THESE THINGS CLEARLY HAS AN EXAGGERATED SENSE OF MY ABILITIES...

AH! SO YOU SEEK TO DABBLE IN DARK MAGIC, DO YOU?
I...I *AM* A SCHOLAR...
BUT OF *COURSE* YOU ARE.
YOU MUST UNDERSTAND, I *DO NOT* HAVE THE DREADED BOOK...
...ALTHOUGH I *HAVE* SEEN IT. I HAVE TURNED ITS PAGES AND MARVELED AT ITS SIGILS, AND MORE THAN ONCE.
IT WAS *REAL?*
I MEAN, THE *MAGIC* WAS REAL?
OH, THE MAGIC WAS REAL.
I HAVE *REGRETTED* THE ENCOUNTER... AND SOUGHT *ANOTHER*...EVER SINCE.

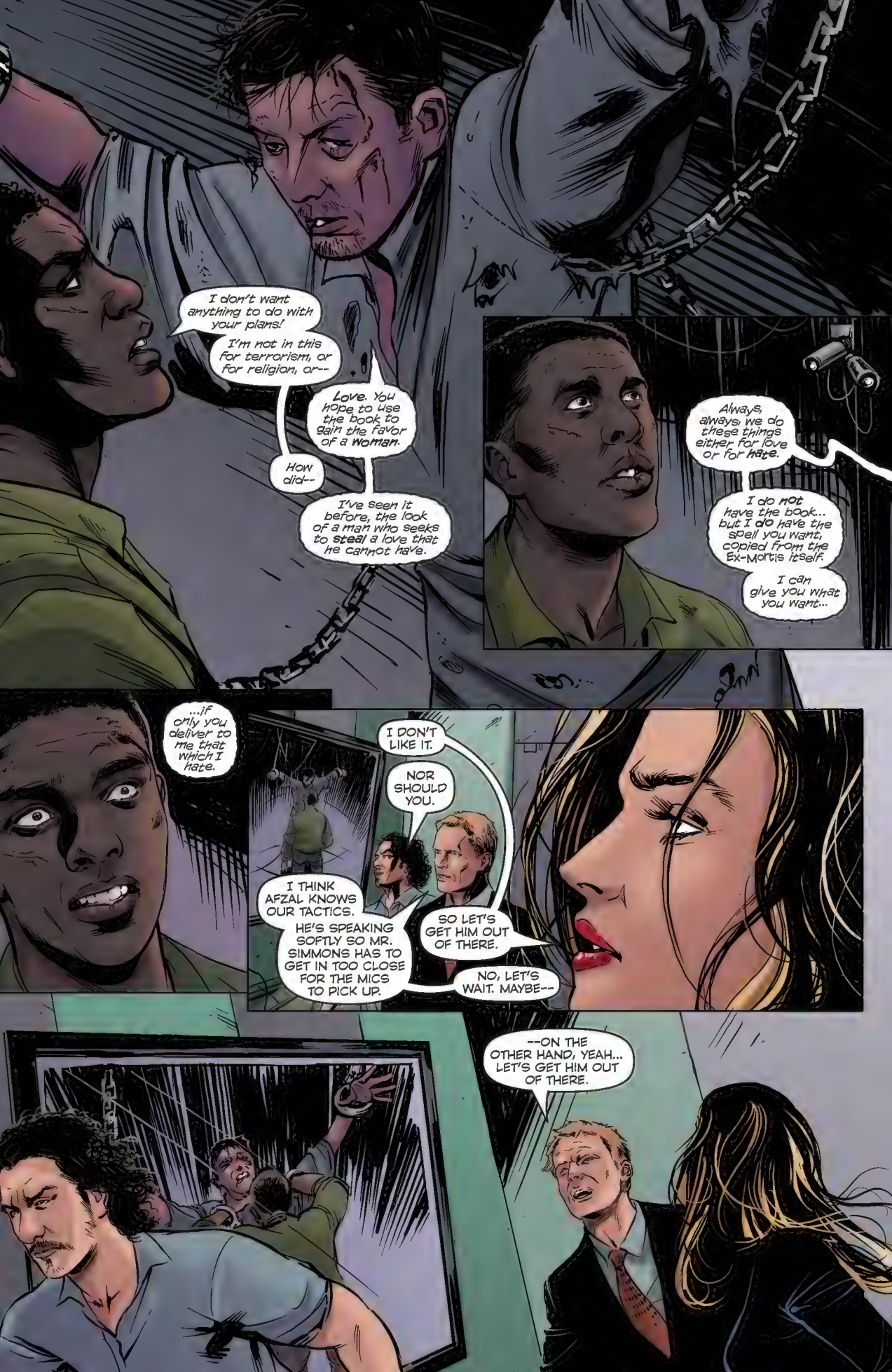
HOW CAN YOU NOT KNOW WHERE THE BOOK IS?
IT SEEMS TO HAVE A WILL OF ITS OWN, SOMETIMES.


WHAT DID YOU WANT IT FOR?
UNDER DIFFERENT CIRCUMSTANCES, I MIGHT THINK THAT QUESTION *RUDE*...


...BUT OBVIOUSLY, I DID HAVE SOMETHING *SIGNIFICANT* IN MIND.

OUR STRIKE TEAM CONFIRMS *THAT* PART OF YOUR STORY, AT LEAST. THE PICTURES ARE PRETTY GRIM...
...BUT THERE'S SOMETHING THAT YOU LEFT *OUT*.
THERE WERE *BOMBS* IN THERE, TOO.
OUR TEAM DEFUSED THEM AT THE SCENE, BUT THE...I DON'T KNOW, THE CHARACTERS PAINTED ON THEM DON'T MAKE ANY SENSE TO ANYBODY HERE.
THIS IS SUPPOSED TO BE *YOUR* FIELD, RIGHT? CARE TO FILL ME IN?
...
THIS *IS* MY FIELD, BUT I'M ONLY JUST DIPPING MY TOES IN THE WATERS OF THE OCCULT.
IF I HAD TO GUESS, I'D SAY THAT THIS KIND OF MAGIC IS INTENDED TO *HEIGHTEN TERROR*...
...TO MAKE SURE THAT WITNESSES AND SURVIVORS ARE FRIGHTENED FOR THE *REST OF THEIR LIVES*...
...BUT I CAN'T BE SURE. NOT WITHOUT TALKING TO AFZAL ABD-APEP.

UTTER FOOLISHNESS.
I DON'T KNOW...THAT MIGHT NOT BE A BAD IDEA.
ARE YOU *INSANE*? WHAT IF THEY--
AFZAL ABD-APEP IS STRAPPED TO A TABLE, AND HE'S ALREADY BEEN TUNED UP PRETTY GOOD.
WHAT ON EARTH IS *THIS* LITTLE QUEER GONNA DO?
LET'S PULL MS. WHITE OUT OF THERE...AND GET AFZAL ABD-APEP A *TOWEL*.
So, uh...you're making *magic bombs*?
As you Americans say, it seemed like a good idea at the time.
"I WANT TO SEE WHAT HAPPENS WHEN THESE TWO GET TO FINISH THEIR CONVERSATION."


I don't want anything to do with your plans!
I'm not in this for terrorism, or for religion, or--
Love. You hope to use the book to gain the favor of a woman.
How did--
I've seen it before, the look of a man who seeks to steal a love that he cannot have.
Always, always, we do these things either for love or for hate.
I do not have the book... but I do have the spell you want, copied from the Ex-Mortis itself.
I can give you what you want...
...if only you deliver to me that which I hate.
I DON'T LIKE IT.
NOR SHOULD YOU.
I THINK AFZAL KNOWS OUR TACTICS.
HE'S SPEAKING SOFTLY SO MR. SIMMONS HAS TO GET IN TOO CLOSE FOR THE MICS TO PICK UP.
SO LET'S GET HIM OUT OF THERE.
NO, LET'S WAIT. MAYBE--
--ON THE OTHER HAND, YEAH... LET'S GET HIM OUT OF THERE.

GIVE IT TO ME!
GIVE ME THE SPELL!
"THEY'RE COMING RIGHT NOW!! YOU THINK THEY WON'T KILL US BOTH?!
"I WOULD RATHER DIE THAN LIVE WITHOUT BRITTANY!!"
You sure seem like someone who wants to live...
SHUT UP. I DO WANT TO LIVE...BUT ONLY WITH BRITTANY.
You're in over your head...but I like you.
I will give you the spell, or rather...
...I'll sell it to you.
SELL IT TO ME? FOR HOW MUCH?
For the only coin that has any value to me.

DON? DON, COME ON, YOU'RE NOT DOING YOURSELF ANY GOOD IN THERE!
I can't believe you let him go in there by himself.
Shut your damn cake hole.
I don't even know what that means.
Jesus, read a book or something. In English.
YOU AND AFZAL ARE BOTH ASSETS! IT'S BETTER FOR EVERYONE IF BOTH OF YOU COME OUT OF THERE IN ONE PIECE.
I DON'T WANT TO TALK TO YOU. THEY ONLY USED YOU TO CONFUSE ME.
I WANT TO TALK TO YOUR BOSS.
THAT'S NOT HOW THIS WORKS, DON.
WELL, THEN YOUR ASSET'S VALUE IS ABOUT TO TAKE A TUMBLE.
NEVER MIND, WE DON'T HAVE TIME FOR THIS CRAP.
WHAT IS IT THAT YOU WANT?
COME TO THE DOOR. I HAVE SOMETHING THAT YOU NEED TO SEE.
SO WHAT THE HELL DO YOU--?
JUST LOOK...LOOK CLOSELY.
DO YOU SEE IT?
ISN'T IT BEAUTIFUL?
DOESN'T IT ALL MAKE SENSE NOW?

NO! LEAVE ME ALONE!
I'M FINE.
CLEAR THE HALL.
IN FACT, EVERYONE TO THEIR QUARTERS.
WE'RE ON LOCKDOWN UNTIL I GET THIS SORTED OUT.
GO.
NOW!
I'M GONNA HAVE TO EDIT THE HELL OUT OF THIS VIDEO, HUH?

WHAT WAS ALL THAT "ISN'T IT BEAUTIFUL" STUFF? YOU ARE SO EMO!
AFZAL? IS IT REALLY YOU?
COME ON NOW! YOU KILLED AFZAL YOURSELF!
MY NAME IS...WELL, I GUESS THAT'S CLASSIFIED, BUT I'M A RED-BLOODED AMERICAN BOY, JUST LIKE YOU!
WELL, NOT JUST LIKE YOU... TURNS OUT I DON'T MUCH LIKE BLACK PEOPLE!
So what does this mean?
WELL, IT MEANS I'M RESPONSIBLE FOR THIS INDELICATE CADAVER, SO I GUESS I HAVE TO HONOR HIS CONTRACTS.
HEEEEERE YOU ARE, ONE EXTREMELY POTENT SPELL GUARANTEED TO CHARM THE PANTS OFF OF WHOMEVER YOU CHOOSE TO CAST IT ON...AND I MEAN THAT LITERALLY.
HOW...HOW DO I READ IT?
YOU JUST COMPLETE THE CEREMONY THAT YOU PROMISED ME...I MEAN, AFZAL...AND YOU'LL BE ABLE TO READ IT WITH NO PROBLEMS.
CEREMONY?
OH YES. GETTING INTO THE CIA IS NOTHING-- IT'S LIKE OUR VERSION OF A BAR MITZVAH.
BUT GETTING THE SECRETS OF THE BIG, BAD BOOK... WELL, THAT'LL COST YOU THE ONLY COIN THAT MATTERS, LIKE I SAID BEFORE.
THAT WILL COST YOU YOUR SOUL... "MY BRUTHA."

SOUL POWER
PART THREE
"LET'S CHOOSE SOMEONE ELSE."
"THERE IS NO BETTER CHOICE. WE CAN USE HIM FOR BOTH SPELLS... UNLESS YOU'D RATHER FIND TWO PEOPLE...?"

"NO... NO."
"GOOD! I CAN'T STAND INEFFICIENCY."
"PLUS HE LOOKS LIKE A MASSIVE TOOL."

"IT'S JUST... IF BRITTANY FINDS OUT, IT'LL HURT HER. THE LAST THING--"
"PLEASE, JUST STOP. YOU CAN'T EXPECT TO GET SOME IF YOU'RE GONNA BE ONE, YOU KNOW WHAT I'M SAYING?"

"OKAY, I'M READY. LET'S DO THIS."
"I'M NOT DOING ANYTHING. THIS IS ALL YOU, PRECIOUS BOY...
"...BUT MAYBE YOU SHOULD PUT YOUR MASK ON, YOU MORON.
"LUCKY FOR ME, GOD REALLY DOESN'T PROTECT COWARDS OR FOOLS..."

WAAAAAUGH!!
"CASE IN POINT."
YAAAHH!!
YOU KNOW, THERE'S A *REASON* I'M NOT AFRAID TO WALK ALONE IN THE PARK AT NIGHT.
I'VE BEEN *WAITING* FOR SOMETHING LIKE THIS TO HAPPEN.
UNH!
HEY!
WAIT...I KNOW *YOU*. YOU'RE IN ONE OF MY CLASSES.
YOU GOT *PLENTY* OF MONEY! WHY ARE YOU--?

AAAAAAAHH!!
YOU... YOU...
THIS WASN'T SUPPOSED TO HAPPEN!
WE ONLY NEEDED A FINGER FOR THE SPELL!

"YOU DIDN'T HAVE TO DO THAT!"
"ARE YOU KIDDING? ALL THAT GUY EVER WANTED TO DO WAS BE ABLE TO CLAIM SELF-DEFENSE AFTER KILLING A *BLACK* GUY...AND YOU HAD JUST GIVEN HIM THAT."
"HOW DO YOU KNOW THAT?"
"BECAUSE ALL *I* EVER WANTED TO DO WAS BE ABLE TO KILL A BLACK GUY AND CLAIM SELF-DEFENSE. NOW LET'S GET TO WORK."

DON'T WORRY ABOUT THE ARRANGEMENT OF THE SACRIFICIAL ITEMS... THEY'RE JUST GOING TO BE CONSUMED BY THE SPELL ANYWAY.
ARE YOU SURE ABOUT THIS STUFF THOUGH?

I MEAN, I DON'T GET IT.
A JAR OF MAYONNAISE. MY SKI MASK. MY OLD SWIM TRUNKS. A VHS COPY OF *SONG OF THE SOUTH*. AN OLD POSTER OF A LAMBORGHINI COUNTACH. AN *IGGY AZALEA* CD.
WHAT DOES ANY OF THIS STUFF HAVE TO DO WITH SELLING MY SOUL?

IF YOU HAVE TO ASK, YOU'LL NEVER KNOW.
Although you pretty much sold your soul as soon as you bought that Iggy Azalea CD.
That ass notwithstanding.

DON'T FORGET *THIS*.
I THOUGHT THAT THIS WAS FOR THE *OTHER* SPELL?
IT'S ALL KINDA GONNA HAPPEN AT ONCE.

I...I DON'T FEEL ANY DIFFERENT.
IT'S BECAUSE YOU WEREN'T *DOING* ANYTHING WITH IT... IT'S LIKE LETTING VIRGIN SNOW MELT ON YOUR TONGUE.
NOW DO IT LIKE I SAID. AND *GET READY.*

SSSSO, YOU FOUND THE BOOK, DID YOU MY DEAREST LOVE? IT WASN'T THE FOOL'S ERRAND I'D EXPECTED.
NO MATTER.
THE BOOK IS LOST, [illegible], AS YOU SUSPECTED.
BUT ITS MAGIC CAN BE ANYWHERE. THE ONLY ONE ON A FOOL'S ERRAND IS YOU.
NOW!! CAST THE SPELL!!

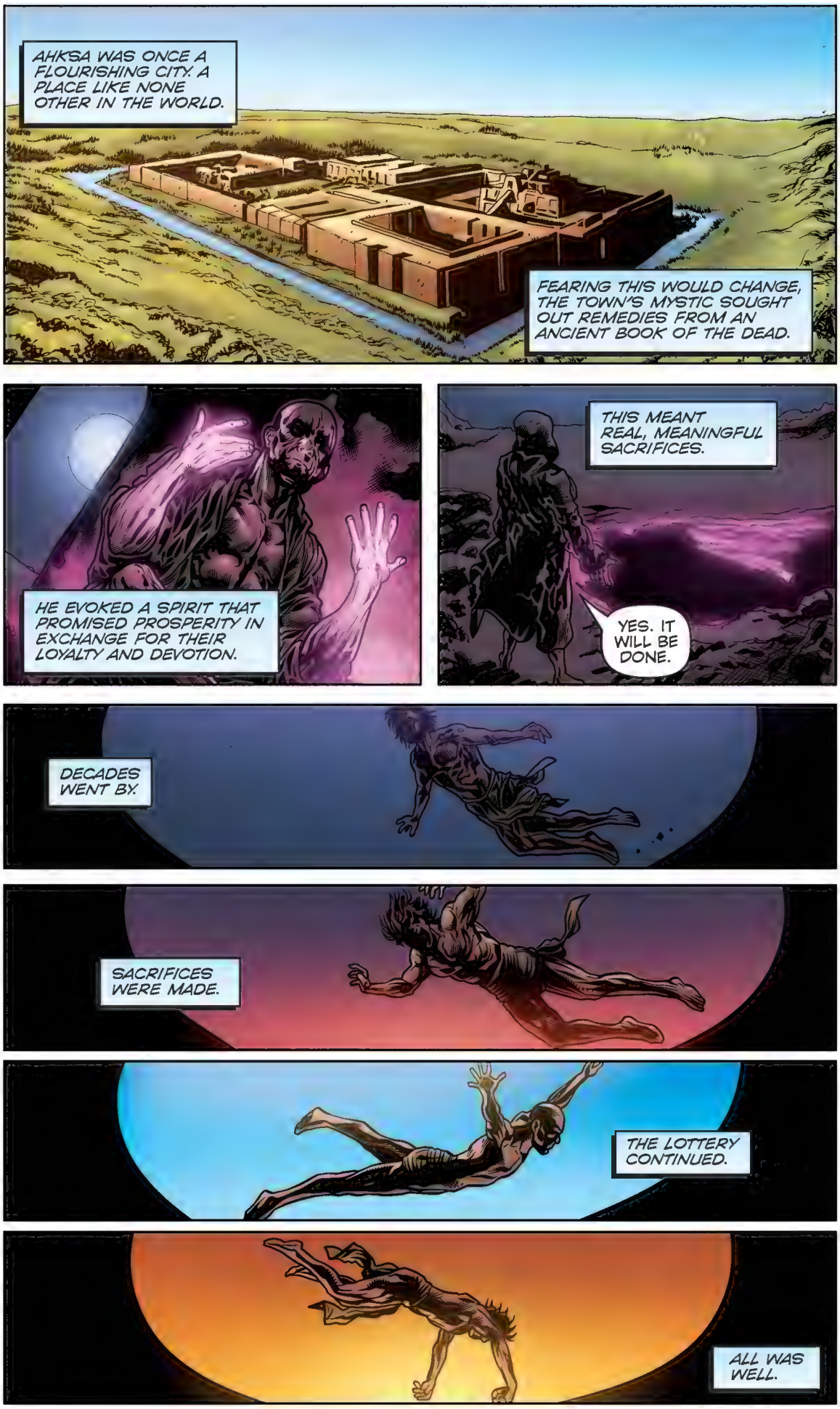
OKAY, UH...
NOK NOK NOK
What the--?
DON? DON, ARE YOU IN THERE?
OH DON, I NEED YOU!
WELL... NOW WE HAVE OURSELVES A PARTY!

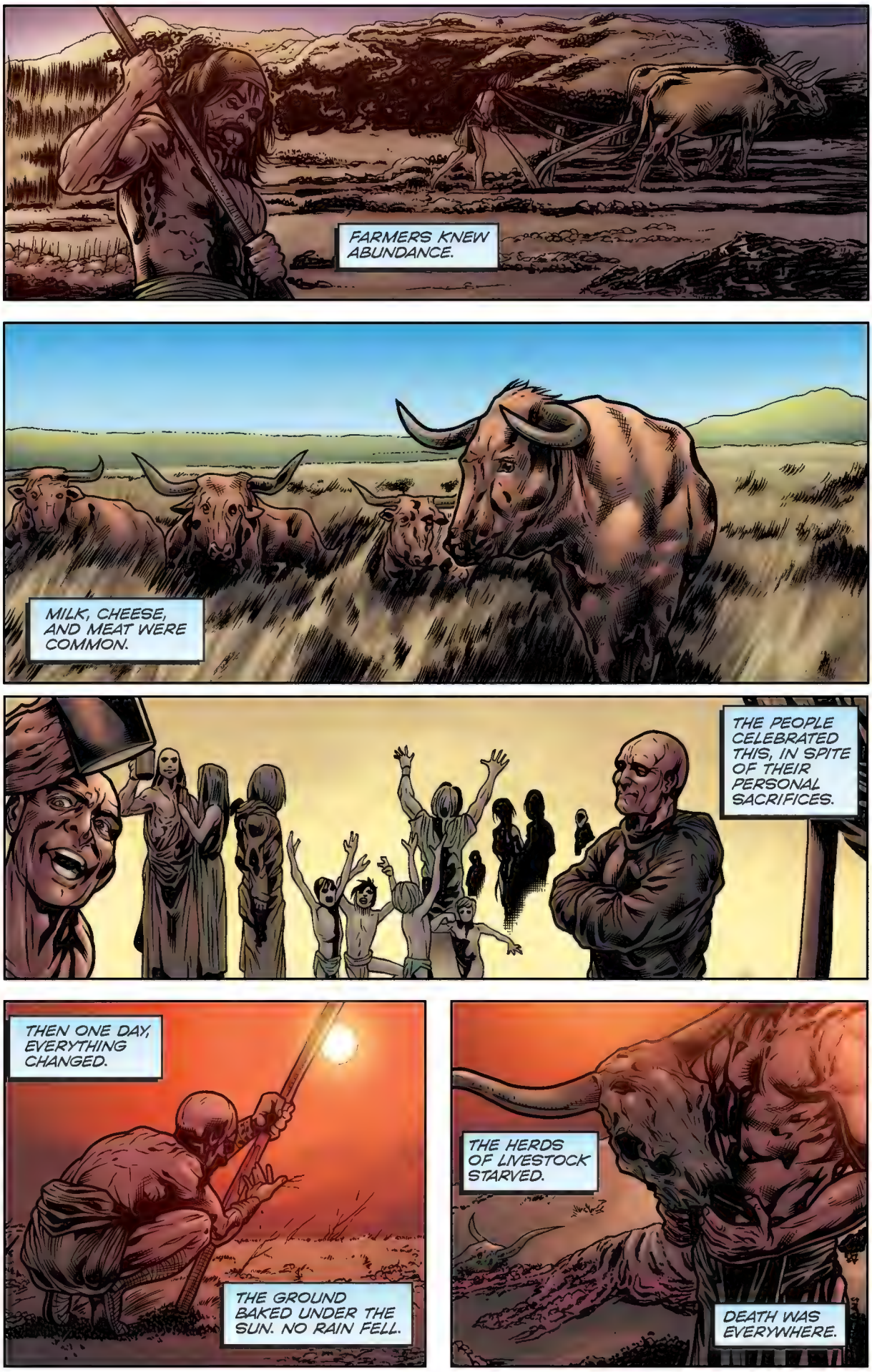
WHO COULD THAT BE, SWEET BOTTOM?!
SOMEBODY TO MAKE THINGS INTERESTING?
NO!
NO... PLEASE...
NOT TO WORRY, BROTHER-MAN!!
I'LL TAKE CARE OF YOUR GIRL!
I NEED HER, AFTER ALL...
"...TO TAKE CARE OF MINE."

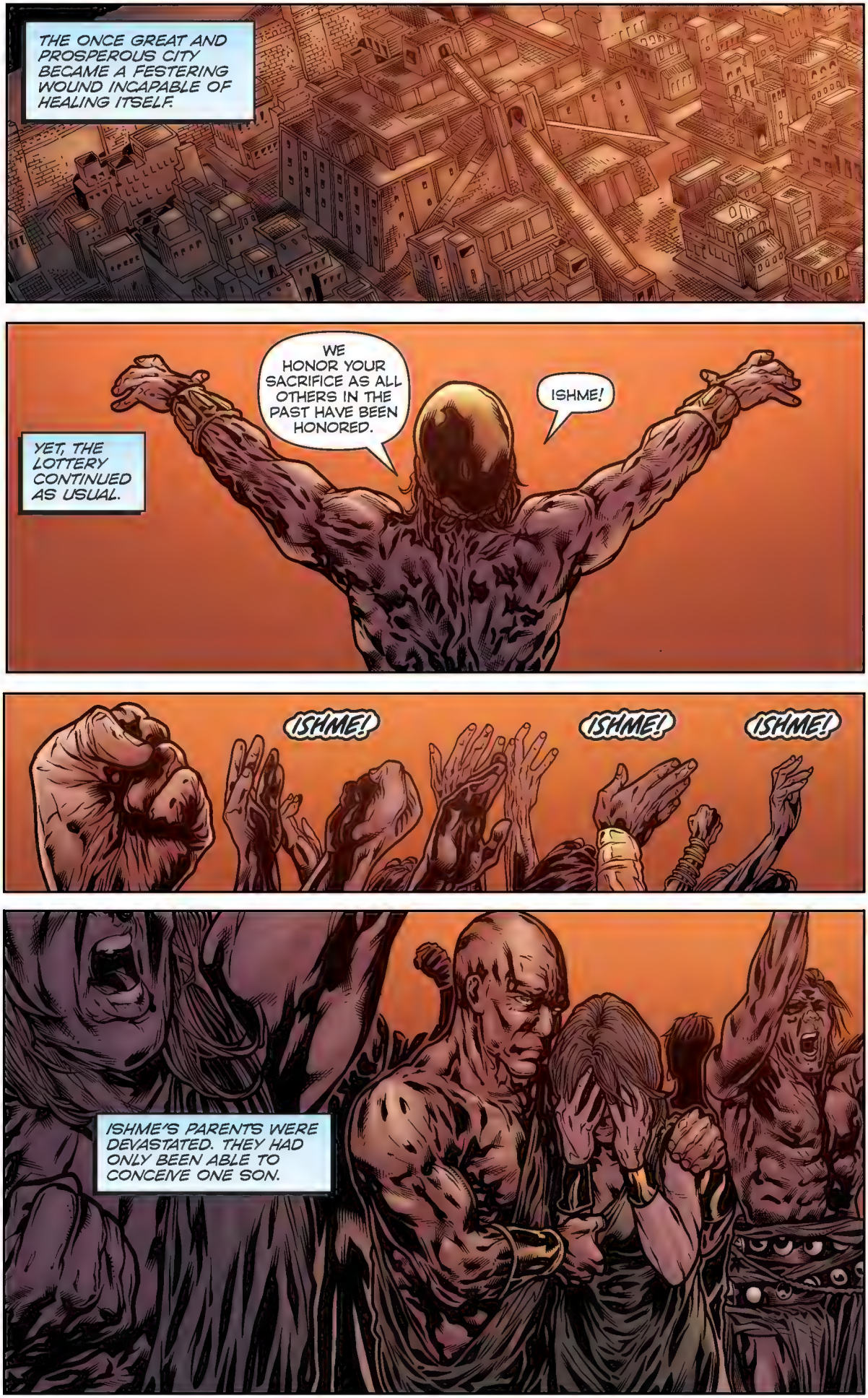
HEY THERE, KIDDO.
I'M NOT SURE SHE'S IN ANY CONDITION TO ACCEPT FLOWERS.
WHAT? OH, THESE ARE FOR YOU.
YOU'VE HAD A ROUGH ROAD THESE PAST FEW MONTHS.
FOR ME?
HMM. YES.
A ROAD YOU PUT ME ON.
DID I?
I WARNED YOU.
I TOLD YOU THAT YOUR WORST CASE SCENARIO WAS SUCCESS, IF YOU'LL RECALL.
"YES. YES, I DID.
"ALTHOUGH, TO BE FAIR, I HAD NO IDEA WHERE THE ROAD WOULD LEAD YOU."
"DID YOU CARE?"
"OF COURSE NOT. I JUST WANTED THE BOOK...
"...JUST AS YOU WANTED THE GIRL. YOU KNEW THE RISKS."
WHERE ARE YOU, LOVE DADDY?!
I KNOW YOU'RE THERE!!
COME GIVE MAMA A KISS!!
MAMA LOVES YOU!!
MAMA LOVES YOU!!
"AND SUCCEED YOU DID, MY BOY. SUCCEED YOU DID."
END

SOMETHING'S COMING

4000 B.C.
THE SUMERIAN CITY OF AKHSA.
THE LOTTERY
I REMEMBER HEARING THE TALE FOR THE FIRST TIME AS A CHILD. IT WAS SOMETHING TO KEEP US IN LINE. IT WAS TOLD TO MY FATHER AND MY FATHER'S FATHER.
EVERYONE KNOWS THE STORY OF ISHME AHR. FOR THOSE WHO DO NOT, I SHALL TELL IT TO YOU NOW.
THE CITY OF AHKSA HELD A YEARLY LOTTERY. THE WINNER OF THE LOTTERY WAS GIVEN THE HIGHEST HONOR THE CITY COULD BESTOW.
ISHME AHR!
THE PERSON WAS CHOSEN TO KEEP THE HARMONIOUS BALANCE BETWEEN THE GODS AND MAN.
SACRIFICE.
AS YOU CAN SEE, THE NAME IS HERE ON THE STONE.
NO ONE WAS SPARED. NOT WOMEN, NOT CHILDREN. NOT THE LAME, THE SICK OR THE BLIND.
AND FOR YEARS, IT WORKED.
IN RECENT YEARS, DESPITE THESE FAITHFUL OFFERINGS, THE BALANCE WAS LOST.
AND THE TOWNSPEOPLE KNEW IT.


AHKSA WAS ONCE A FLOURISHING CITY. A PLACE LIKE NONE OTHER IN THE WORLD.
FEARING THIS WOULD CHANGE, THE TOWN'S MYSTIC SOUGHT OUT REMEDIES FROM AN ANCIENT BOOK OF THE DEAD.
HE EVOKED A SPIRIT THAT PROMISED PROSPERITY IN EXCHANGE FOR THEIR LOYALTY AND DEVOTION.
THIS MEANT REAL, MEANINGFUL SACRIFICES.
YES. IT WILL BE DONE.
DECADES WENT BY.
SACRIFICES WERE MADE.
THE LOTTERY CONTINUED.
ALL WAS WELL.


FARMERS KNEW ABUNDANCE.
MILK, CHEESE, AND MEAT WERE COMMON.
THE PEOPLE CELEBRATED THIS, IN SPITE OF THEIR PERSONAL SACRIFICES.
THEN ONE DAY, EVERYTHING CHANGED.
THE GROUND BAKED UNDER THE SUN. NO RAIN FELL.
THE HERDS OF LIVESTOCK STARVED.
DEATH WAS EVERYWHERE.


THE ONCE GREAT AND PROSPEROUS CITY BECAME A FESTERING WOUND INCAPABLE OF HEALING ITSELF.
YET, THE LOTTERY CONTINUED AS USUAL.
WE HONOR YOUR SACRIFICE AS ALL OTHERS IN THE PAST HAVE BEEN HONORED.
ISHME!
ISHME!
ISHME!
ISHME!
ISHME'S PARENTS WERE DEVASTATED. THEY HAD ONLY BEEN ABLE TO CONCEIVE ONE SON.

THE TOWN POURED THEIR HOPES INTO ISHME. THEY NEEDED SOMETHING TO BELIEVE IN.
IT'S FINE, MOTHER! I'M READY.
IT WON'T WORK. THE LAST FIVE YEARS HAVE BEEN WORSE.
WHAT DOES THAT TELL YOU?
THE BOY HAS SPENT HIS LIFE KNOWING THIS COULD HAPPEN. LET HIM BE.
CHEAP SORCERY? THAT'S THE ANSWER?
NO! I WON'T HAVE IT. NOT MY BOY!
MAYBE THERE IS SOMETHING WE CAN DO.
WE'VE COME TO THE COUNCIL TO PLEAD FOR OUR SON'S LIFE.
IT HASN'T WORKED FOR YEARS!
WHAT MAKES YOU THINK IT WILL WORK NOW?
I'M SORRY. OUR AGREEMENT TO HOLD THE LOTTERY IS FINAL.
WE ALL LIVE UNDER THE FEAR THAT WE COULD BE TAKEN. HOW MUCH WORSE MIGHT IT BE IF WE STOPPED?
IT IS THE HIGHEST HONOR A CITIZEN CAN HOLD TO BE TAKEN WILLINGLY.
NOW, I SUGGEST YOU SPEND THE TIME YOU HAVE LEFT WITH YOUR SON...

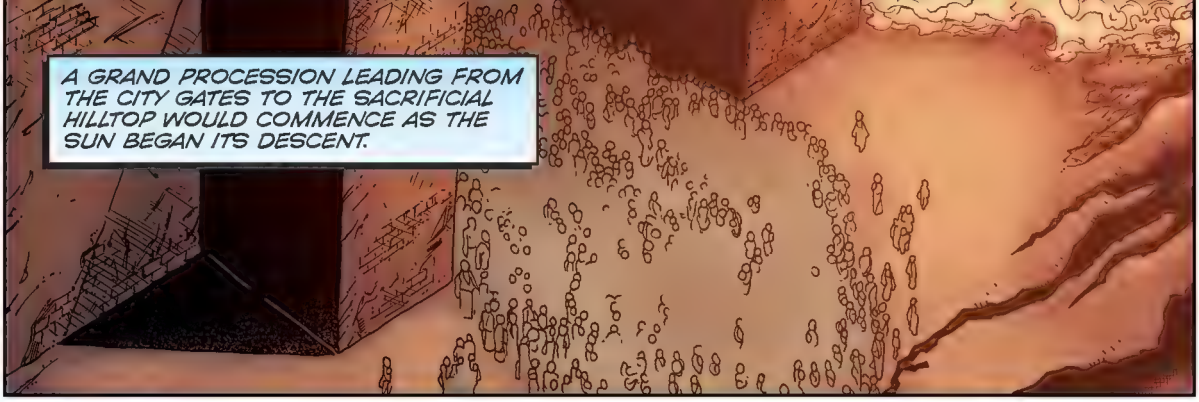
WHAT WAS UNEXPECTED WAS ISHME'S WILLINGNESS. HE DID NOT WISH DEATH UPON HIMSELF. HE JUST UNDERSTOOD HIS ROLE.
I RELINQUISH YOUR HOLD ON ME. I PUT AWAY THE TRAPPINGS OF THIS LIFE SO THAT I MAY FULLY BE ABLE TO GIVE MYSELF TO THE DARK ONE.

HE MENTALLY PREPARED HIMSELF IN ALL THE TRADITIONAL WAYS.

EVEN HIS LAST MEAL WAS MODEST. HE DIDN'T SEE IT AS A LAST HURRAH.

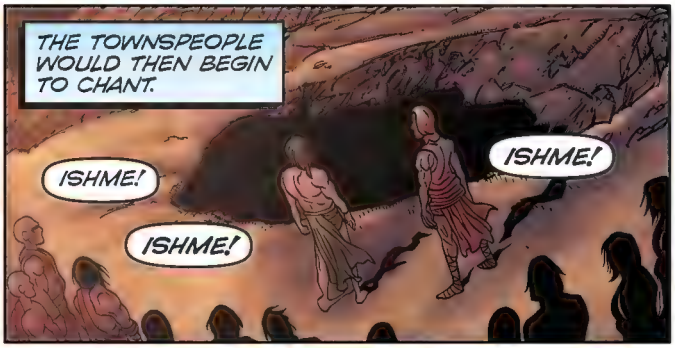
HE KNEW HIS COMPLETE WILLINGNESS WOULD BE THE ANSWER TO THE CITY'S TROUBLES.

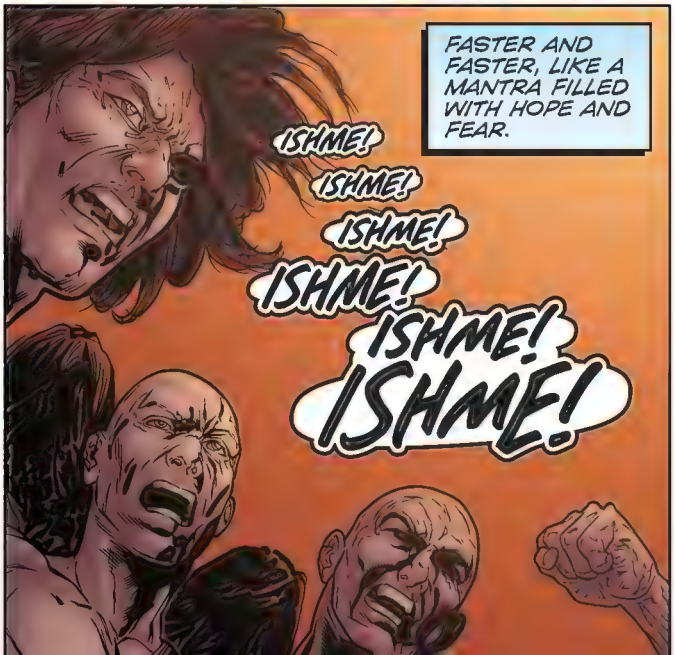
I AM READY...
MY SON. I AM SO PROUD. WE BOTH ARE.
I KNOW.
AND I LOVE YOU BOTH.
WHILE FAMILY MEMBERS WERE ENCOURAGED TO ATTEND THE PROCEEDINGS...
IT'S TIME.
...ISHME'S PARENTS REFUSED ON PRINCIPLE.
IT WAS JUST TOO PAINFUL TO BEAR.


A GRAND PROCESSION LEADING FROM THE CITY GATES TO THE SACRIFICIAL HILLTOP WOULD COMMENCE AS THE SUN BEGAN ITS DESCENT.

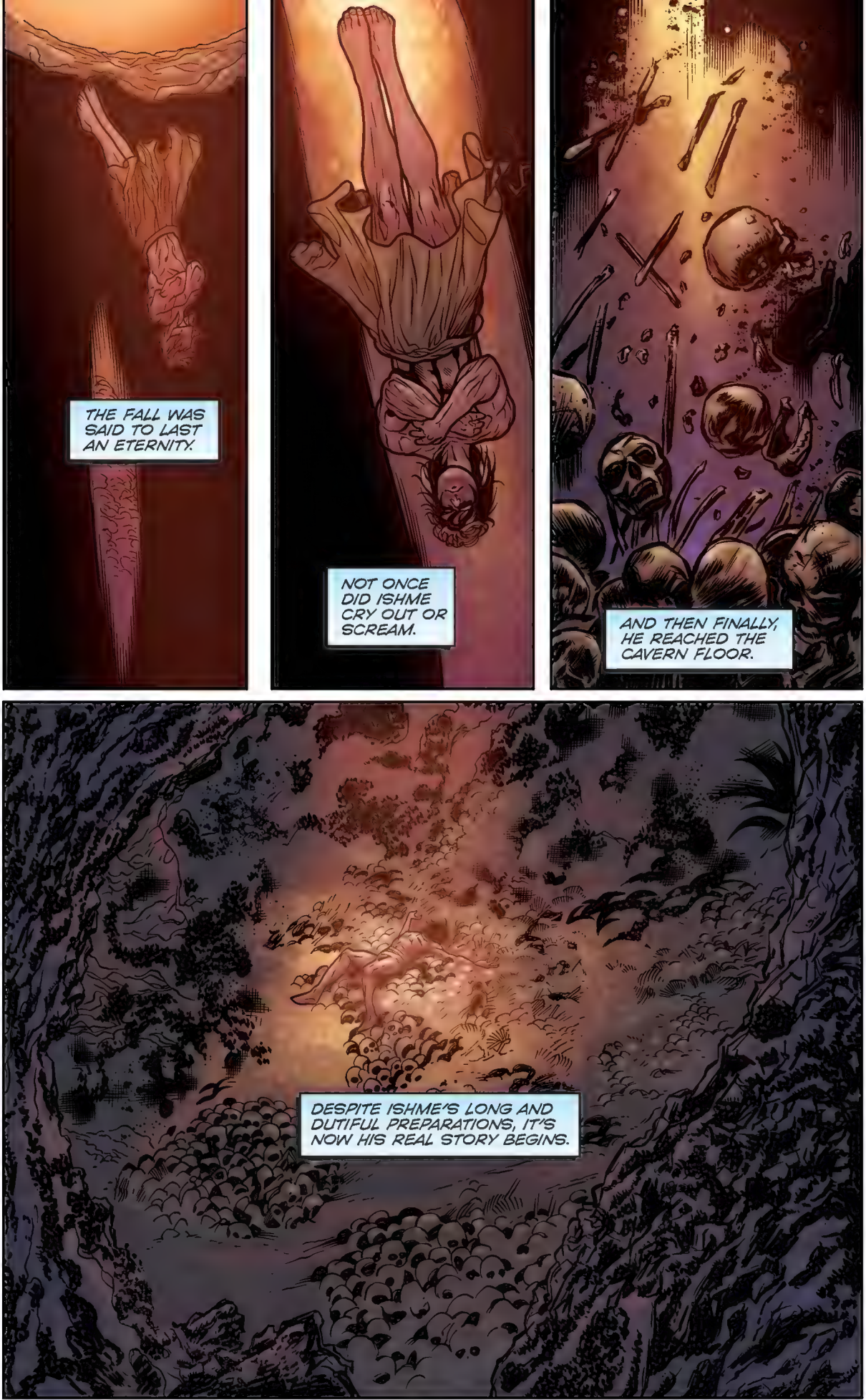
IT WOULD MOVE IN SILENCE.

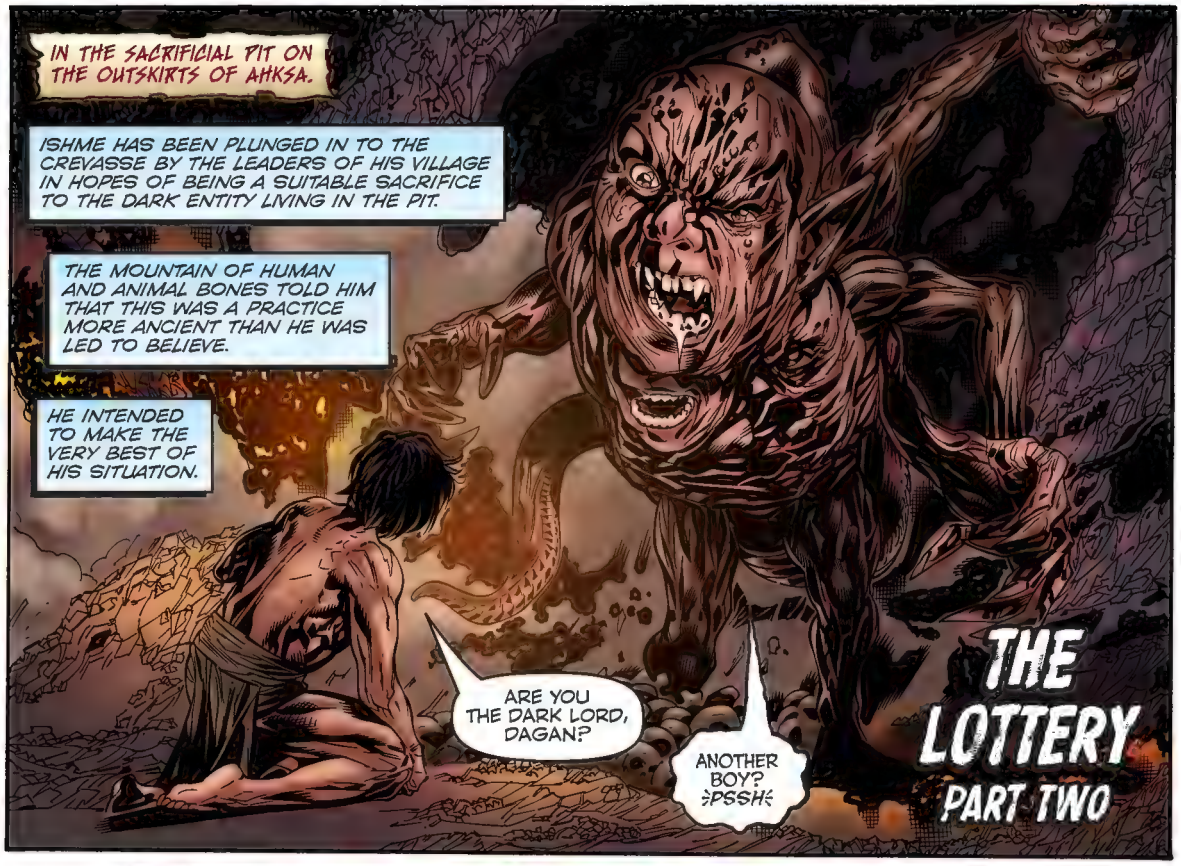
YOUNG ISHME HAD RESIGNED HIMSELF TO HIS FATE.


THE TOWNSPEOPLE WOULD THEN BEGIN TO CHANT.
ISHME!
ISHME!
ISHME!

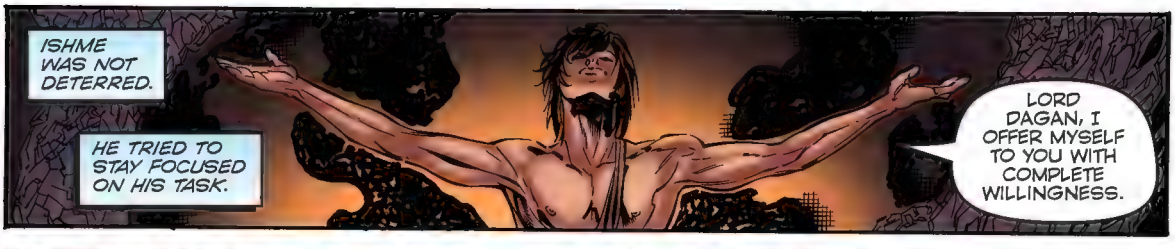

FASTER AND FASTER, LIKE A MANTRA FILLED WITH HOPE AND FEAR.
ISHME!
ISHME!
ISHME!
ISHME!
ISHME!
ISHME!

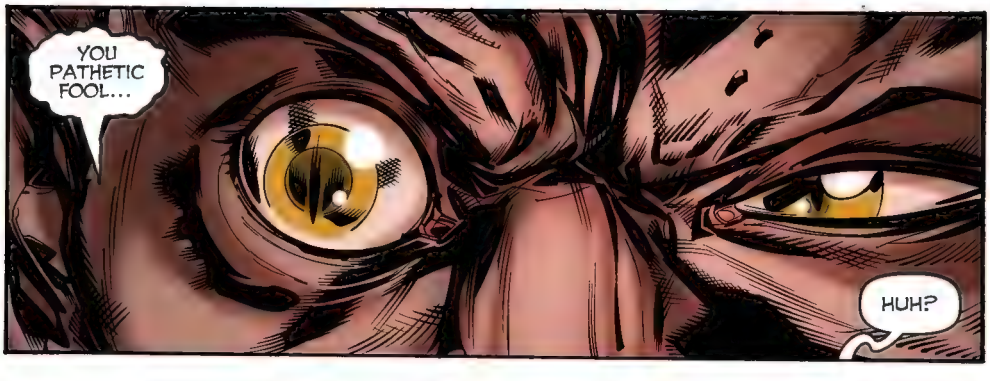
THE BEAST'S NAME WAS DAGAN. IT HAD NEVER BEEN SEEN, BUT EVERYONE KNEW IT WAS REAL.
GRREEBROOOOWROK
WE STAND HERE IN SERVICE OF YOU, OH DARK ONE. WE BEG YOU TO SHOW MERCY TO US AND OUR KIN.
LET THIS OFFERING SHOW OUR WILLINGNESS TO EARN YOUR FAVORS.
WITH THAT, ISHME WAS DROPPED INTO THE PIT.


THE FALL WAS SAID TO LAST AN ETERNITY.
NOT ONCE DID ISHME CRY OUT OR SCREAM.
AND THEN FINALLY, HE REACHED THE CAVERN FLOOR.
DESPITE ISHME'S LONG AND DUTIFUL PREPARATIONS, IT'S NOW HIS REAL STORY BEGINS.


IN THE SACRIFICIAL PIT ON THE OUTSKIRTS OF AHKSA.
ISHME HAS BEEN PLUNGED IN TO THE CREVASSE BY THE LEADERS OF HIS VILLAGE IN HOPES OF BEING A SUITABLE SACRIFICE TO THE DARK ENTITY LIVING IN THE PIT.
THE MOUNTAIN OF HUMAN AND ANIMAL BONES TOLD HIM THAT THIS WAS A PRACTICE MORE ANCIENT THAN HE WAS LED TO BELIEVE.
HE INTENDED TO MAKE THE VERY BEST OF HIS SITUATION.
ARE YOU THE DARK LORD, DAGAN?
ANOTHER BOY? PSSH
THE LOTTERY
PART TWO

ANOTHER TROPHY TO LITTER THE FLOOR. DO I LOOK LIKE I NEED ANOTHER ROTTING CORPSE TO FESTER DOWN HERE?


ISHME WAS NOT DETERRED.
HE TRIED TO STAY FOCUSED ON HIS TASK.
LORD DAGAN, I OFFER MYSELF TO YOU WITH COMPLETE WILLINGNESS.


YOU PATHETIC FOOL...
HUH?

I WILL NOT RESIST. I KNOW WHAT IS TO COME. I HAVE PREPARED FOR THIS MY ENTIRE LIFE.
BUT HE DIDN'T KNOW WHAT WAS TO COME. HOW COULD HE KNOW?
LISTEN TO ME, FOOL. YOUR LACK OF RESISTANCE HONORS NO ONE. NOT YOUR VILLAGE, NOT YOUR FAMILY, NOT YOURSELF.
I DON'T UNDERSTAND. WHAT IS IT YOU WANT, THEN?
DEATH!

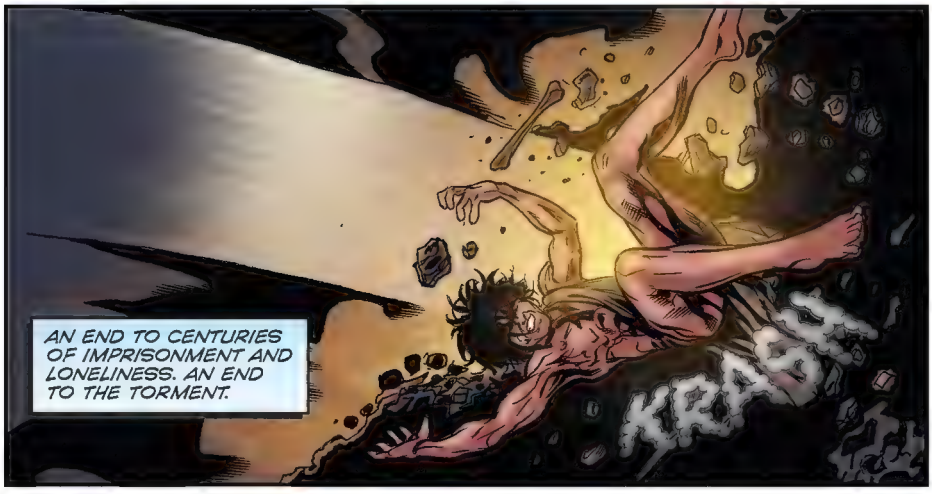
FOR CENTURIES, I ACCEPTED YOUR PATHETIC OFFERINGS. IN RETURN, I LAID FAVOR ON YOUR LAND.

I NEVER ASKED TO BE CONJURED AND TRAPPED IN THIS PRISON OF SICK DEVOTION.
IT MEANS *NOTHING* TO ME.
KRAKOOM

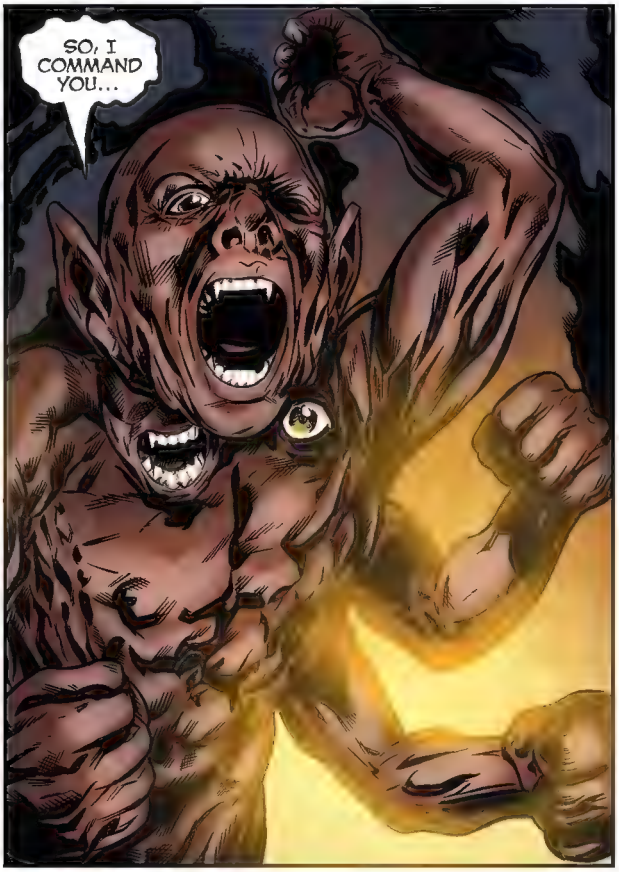
ALL I WANT IS FREEDOM.
FREEDOM FROM THIS ANGRY INFECTION MADE UP OF THE SICK AND FEARFUL SOULS OF YOUR TOWNSPEOPLE.
I WANT DEATH. ARE YOU STRONG ENOUGH TO GIVE IT TO ME?

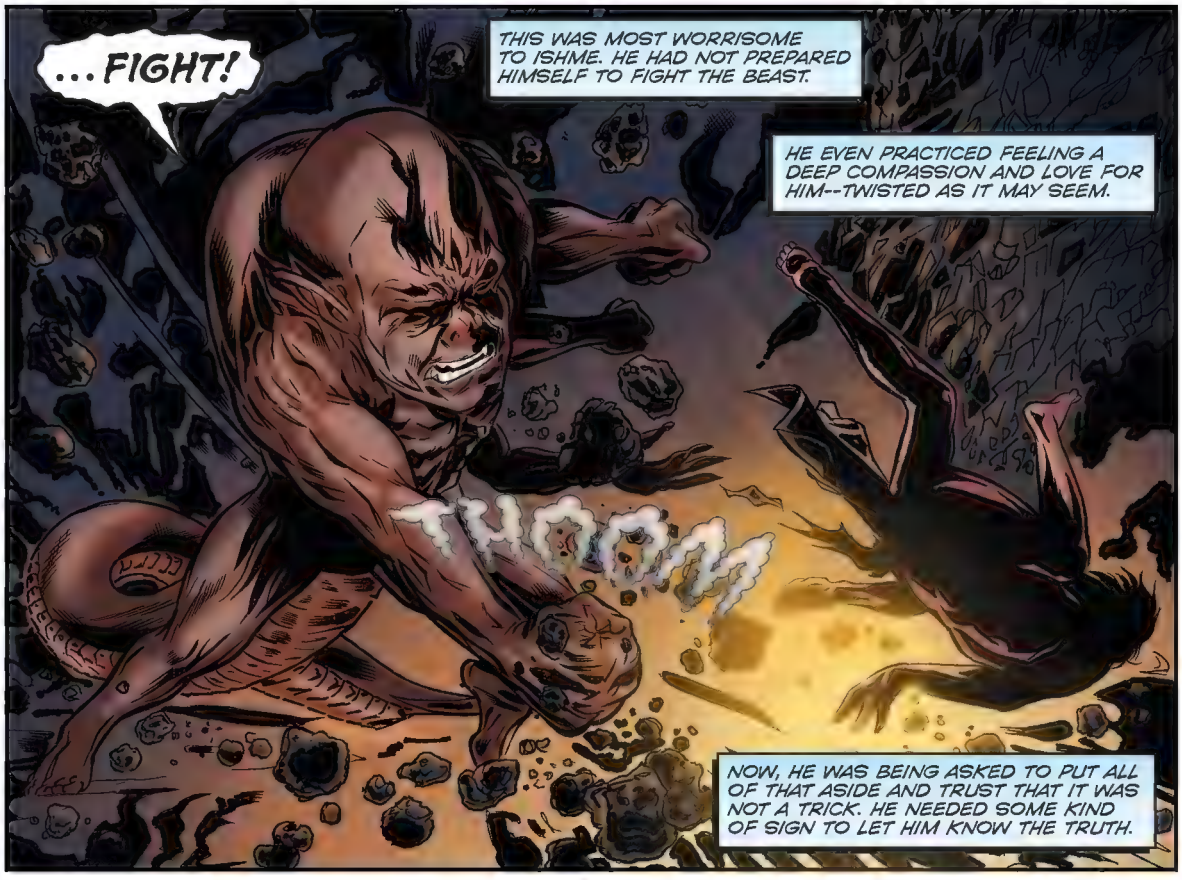
THIS IS A TRICK! YOU'RE TRYING TO FOOL ME INTO FIGHTING YOU. NO! I REFUSE. I GIVE MYSELF--

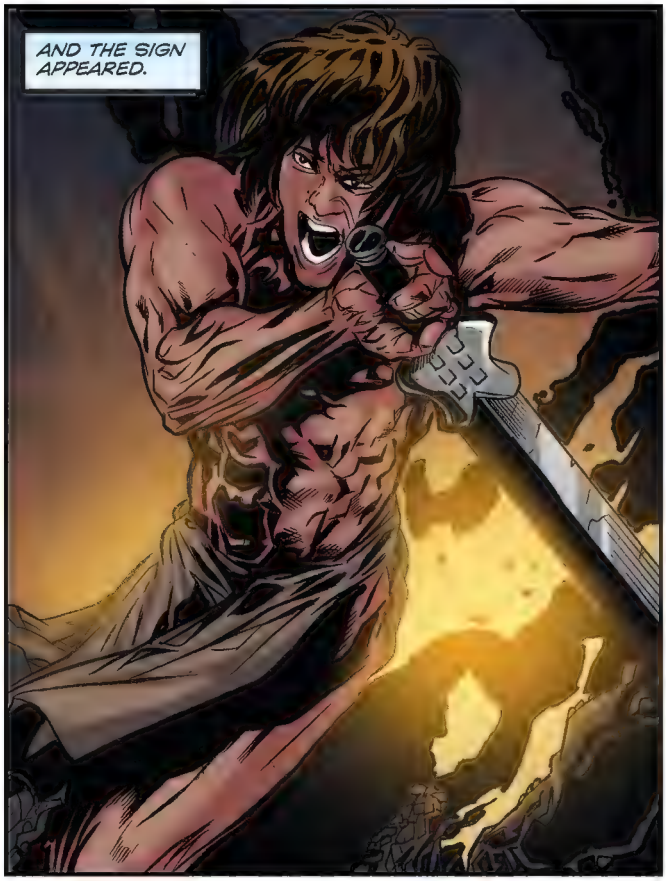
WILLLLINNNGGGLLYYY!
BUT IT WASN'T A TRICK. IT WAS WHAT THE DARK LORD DAGAN CRAVED MORE THAN ANYTHING.

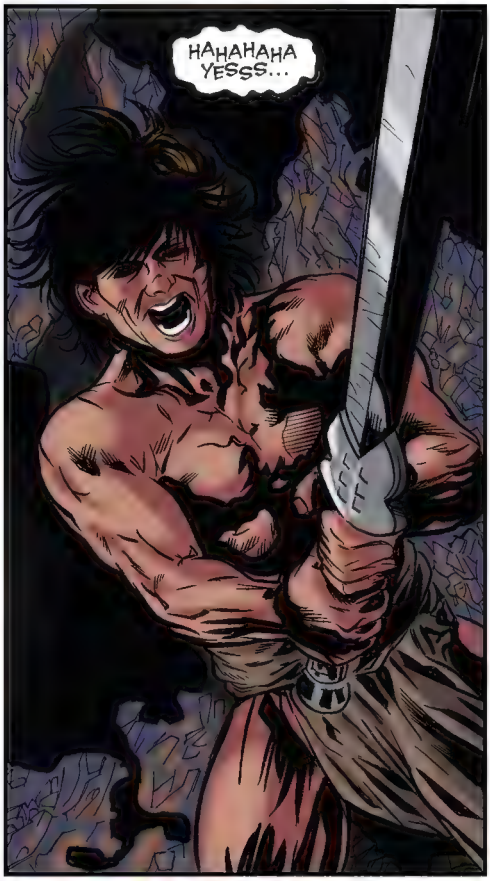

AN END TO CENTURIES OF IMPRISONMENT AND LONELINESS. AN END TO THE TORMENT.
KRAK

UNTIL I GET WHAT I WANT, I WILL CONTINUE TO LET THIS HORRIBLE INFECTION DESTROY YOUR PEOPLE AND ITS LAND.


SO, I COMMAND YOU...

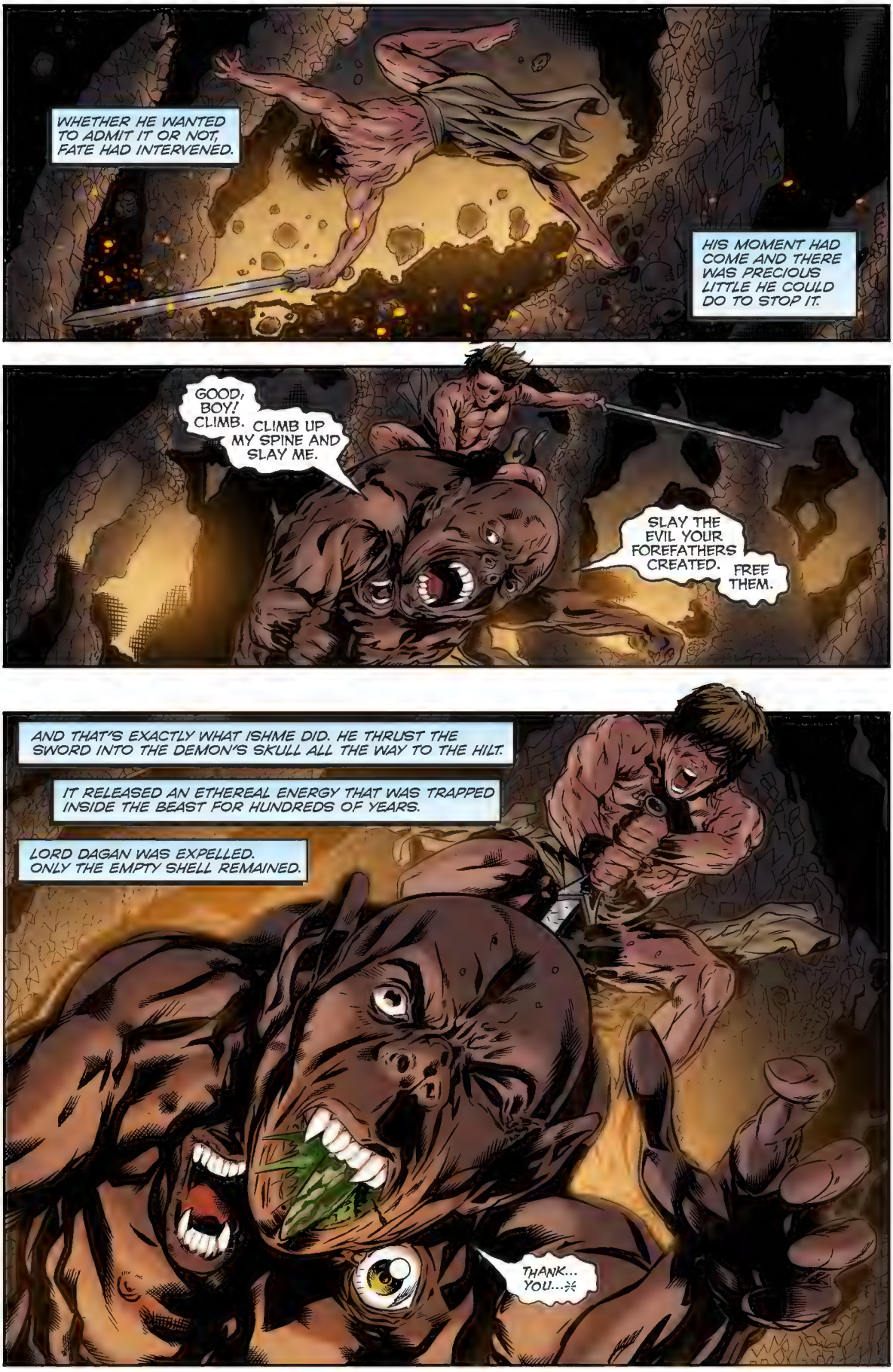

...FIGHT!
THIS WAS MOST WORRISOME TO ISHME. HE HAD NOT PREPARED HIMSELF TO FIGHT THE BEAST.
HE EVEN PRACTICED FEELING A DEEP COMPASSION AND LOVE FOR HIM--TWISTED AS IT MAY SEEM.
THOOM
NOW, HE WAS BEING ASKED TO PUT ALL OF THAT ASIDE AND TRUST THAT IT WAS NOT A TRICK. HE NEEDED SOME KIND OF SIGN TO LET HIM KNOW THE TRUTH.

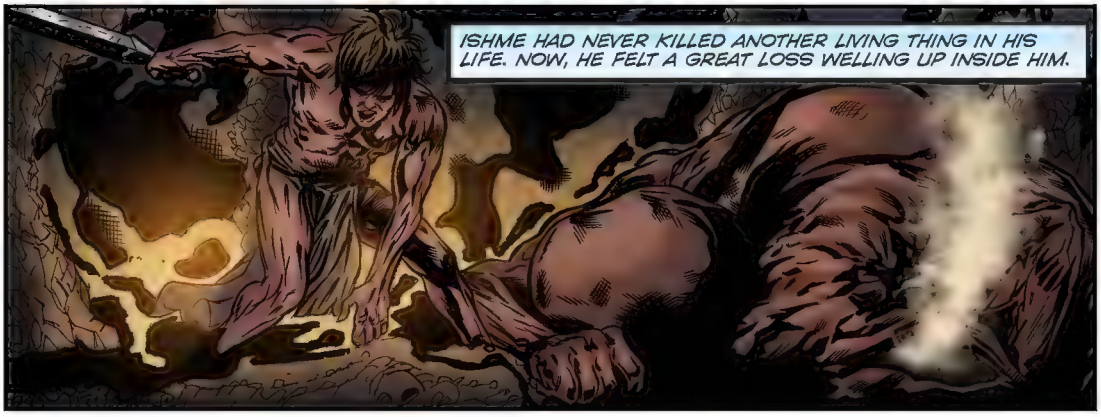

AND THE SIGN APPEARED.


HAHAHAHA YESSS...

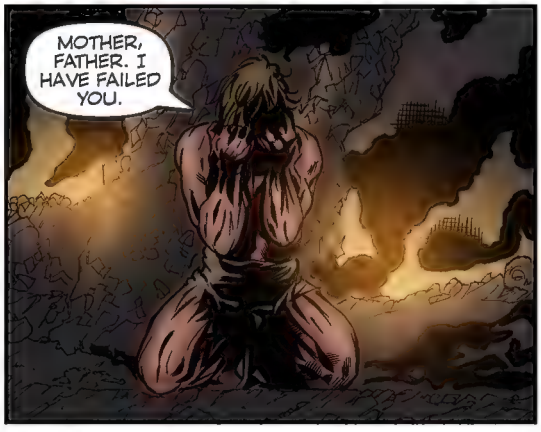
YOU WANT DEATH?! COME FORWARD AND RECEIVE IT!
ALL THAT ANGER. ALL THAT DISAPPOINTMENT. BUBBLING TO THE SURFACE.
A LIFETIME OF SUPPRESSED DISAPPOINTMENT AND EMOTIONAL TURMOIL. EVERY SQUASHED DREAM, EVERY SPARK OF ANGER--WAS NOW RISING UP IN ISHME.
HRRAWW!!
SHHLICK
AARRGGH!

ISHME COULD NOT DENY HIS FEELINGS AND DAGAN COULD SENSE THEIR POWER.
FIGHT! COME ON! FIGHT ME, YOU COWARD!
YOU ARE THE ONE. YOU ALONE ARE WORTHY.
WHERE ARE YOU GOING, BOY?! I TOLD YOU.
ISHME ALSO FELT A RISING DISGUST WITH HIMSELF. HE HAD BETRAYED HIMSELF. HIS FAMILY. HIS VILLAGE. HE WANTED TO ESCAPE.
NOOOOOOOO!

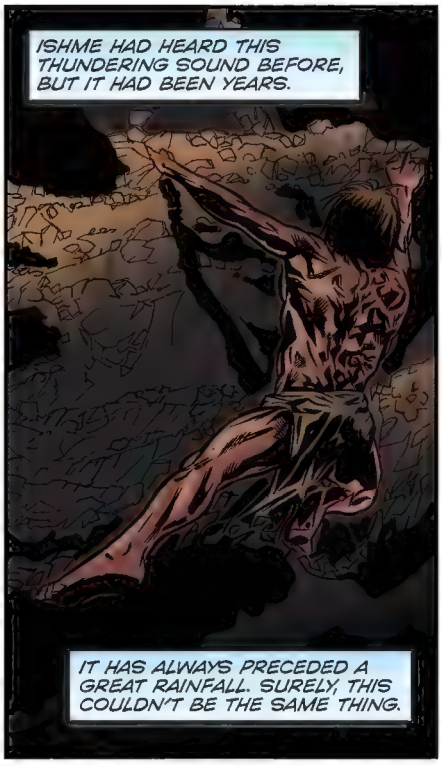

WHETHER HE WANTED TO ADMIT IT OR NOT, FATE HAD INTERVENED.
HIS MOMENT HAD COME AND THERE WAS PRECIOUS LITTLE HE COULD DO TO STOP IT.
GOOD, BOY! CLIMB.
CLIMB UP MY SPINE AND SLAY ME.
SLAY THE EVIL YOUR FOREFATHERS CREATED.
FREE THEM.
AND THAT'S EXACTLY WHAT ISHME DID. HE THRUST THE SWORD INTO THE DEMON'S SKULL ALL THE WAY TO THE HILT.
IT RELEASED AN ETHEREAL ENERGY THAT WAS TRAPPED INSIDE THE BEAST FOR HUNDREDS OF YEARS.
LORD DAGAN WAS EXPELLED. ONLY THE EMPTY SHELL REMAINED.
THANK... YOU...

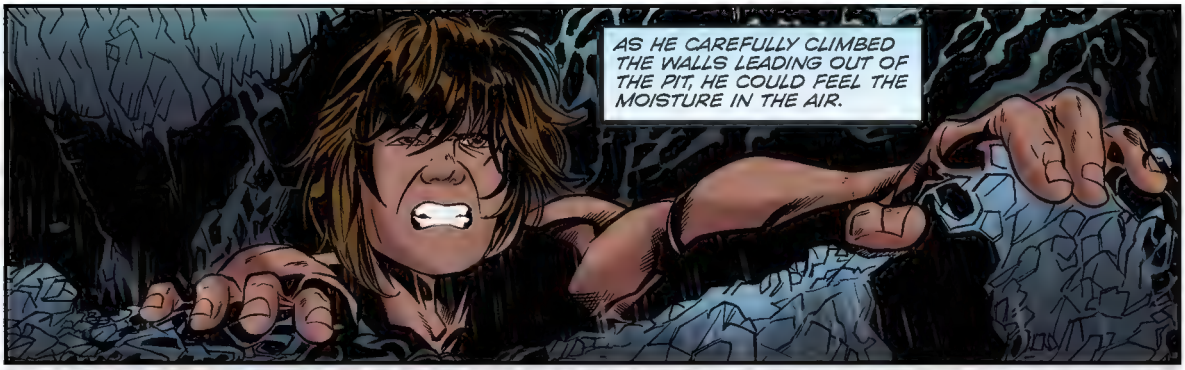

ISHME HAD NEVER KILLED ANOTHER LIVING THING IN HIS LIFE. NOW, HE FELT A GREAT LOSS WELLING UP INSIDE HIM.

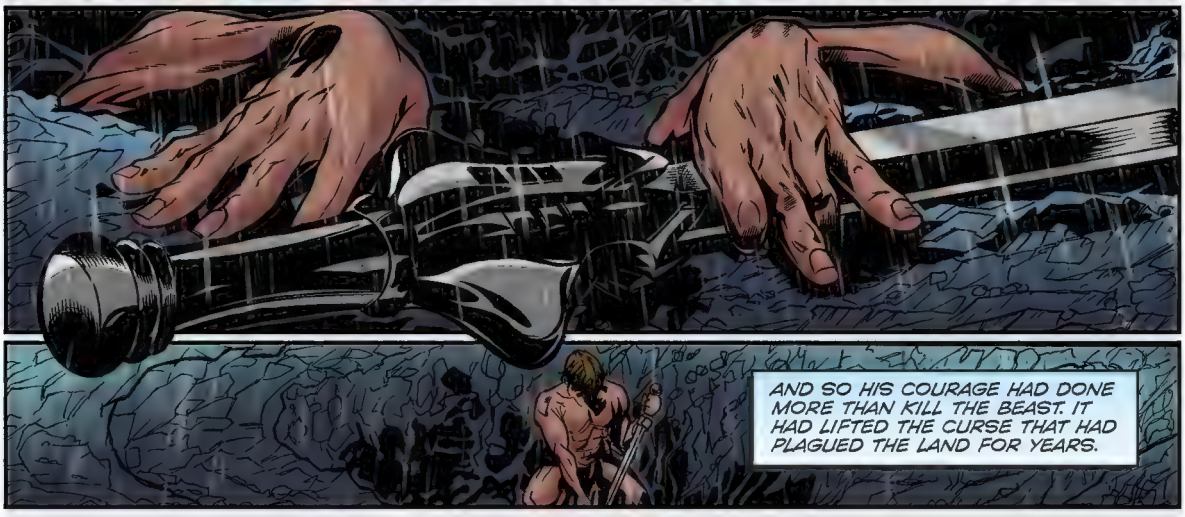
WHAT HAVE I DONE?


MOTHER, FATHER. I HAVE FAILED YOU.

KRA
KOOO
OOOM


ISHME HAD HEARD THIS THUNDERING SOUND BEFORE, BUT IT HAD BEEN YEARS.
IT HAS ALWAYS PRECEDED A GREAT RAINFALL. SURELY, THIS COULDN'T BE THE SAME THING.


AS HE CAREFULLY CLIMBED THE WALLS LEADING OUT OF THE PIT, HE COULD FEEL THE MOISTURE IN THE AIR.


AND SO HIS COURAGE HAD DONE MORE THAN KILL THE BEAST. IT HAD LIFTED THE CURSE THAT HAD PLAGUED THE LAND FOR YEARS.

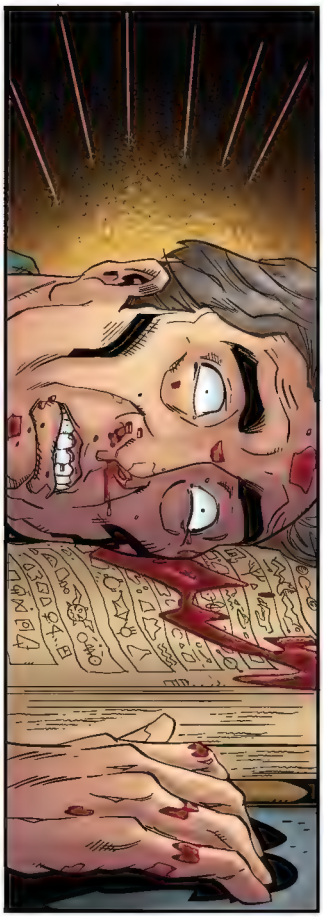
IF THERE IS SOMETHING TO BE LEARNED FROM ISHME'S BRAVERY, IT CANNOT BE TAUGHT.
ONLY LEARNED IN THE PIT OF OUR OWN HEARTS, WHERE MEN ROUTINELY GO TO DIE.
END

THE READ-IT-BEFORE USED BOOKSTORE, NEAR CLOSING TIME.
CAMP DESERTED
SURE, PROFESSOR... I HAVE THE BOOK SET ASIDE FOR YOU.
LOOKS LIKE A FASCINATING READ.
SOLD!
DESTROY IT?
WELL, THAT'S UP TO YOU. IT'S YOUR MONEY.
SURE... SEE YOU IN THE MORNING.
SOLD!
ERR
PLOOP
THE DONATIONS PILE IS RIGHT OVER HERE, MR. BAKER... HOW'S ENROLLMENT GOING?
IT'S GOING TO BE OUR BUSIEST SUMMER AT CAMP WITCHEE-WAKI YET!

A FEW HOURS LATER, THREE NEW COUNSELORS ARE EN ROUTE TO WITCHEE-WAKI...
I DON'T LIKE GETTING STUCK IN THE FRONT SEAT ALONE.
I'M NOT YOUR LIMO DRIVER, DEVON.
A LIMO! WHY DIDN'T I THINK OF THAT?
ALL THREE OF US IN THE BACK, GETTING TO KNOW EACH OTHER BETTER...
>ECK<... JUST STAY ON *YOUR* SIDE OF THE CAMPGROUND, ASSHOLE.
CAMP WITCHEE WAKI
I THOUGHT THEY WERE *EXPECTING* US?
I'LL SEE IF THERE'S AN INTERCOM AROUND SOMEWHERE, WE'LL CONTACT THE OFFICE...
OHMYGOD!
YOU HERE FOR COUNSELOR TRAININ'?

YEAH. WHERE IS EVERYBODY?
DUNNO. I'M NATHAN-RAY, THE GROUNDS-KEEPER.
I DOZED OFF AN HOUR AGO AND AIN'T SEEN A SOUL SINCE.

"THE MAIN OFFICE IS JUST UP THE ROAD."
>GASP< COUNSELOR BAKER!



THERE'S A DEAD GUY IN HERE AND YOU WANT ME TO BELIEVE YOU DIDN'T KNOW ABOUT IT?!
I DIDN'T! I SWEAR!

HEE HA HEE HA HA HEE HA HEE HA HA HEE
>ULP<
CREEK

AAIIEEEE!!
KIKO!!
GET YOUR OWN!
KA-SHOOM
OK, I BELIEVE YOU, NATHAN-RAY. SEE WHAT YOU CAN DO FOR KIKO.
C'MON, KELLY...LET'S DRAG THIS THING OUT OF HERE BEFORE IT GETS UP AGAIN.
Woo...

FIRST WE DUMP HIM, THEN WE HAUL ASS IN YOUR MOM'S MINIVAN.
GET SOME NEW TIRES DOWN THE ROAD, NO ONE KNOWS WE WERE HERE.
PAY OFF THE GROUNDSKEEPER...
CAFETERIA

huff huff WOW, DEVON.
IT'S LIKE YOUR WHOLE LIFE WAS LEADING UP TO COVERING UP MURDER.
CAFETERIA
YOU SMELL THAT?
THAT'S NOT COMING FROM YOU, IS IT...?

HURRRRRR

WHAT THE--?

HURRRRRR
URK—
sob

WHAT HAPPENED?!
DEVON'S DEAD...
>SOB< I'M GETTING OUT OF HERE AND I DON'T CARE WHO COMES WITH ME.
THIS WHOLE PLACE IS POSSESSED...
...ANY OF US COULD BE NEXT--
SNARRRL!

HISS... YOU WILL ALL BURN WITH US...
GAK! GAAA...
THUK
HACK
HACK
HACK
HACK
SQUIRK
Uh, wasn't she a friend of yours?
Eh.

GRAB THAT BOOK, OK?
WHY, YOU GOT A PLAN?
YEAH. WE'RE GOING INTO THE WOODS.
WHAT ABOUT TAKIN' THAT VAN AND GETTING THE HELL OUT OF HERE? THAT'S A GOOD PLAN.
NAH, MY PLAN IS BETTER. JUST START READING THOSE LAST FEW PAGES...AND DON'T LOOK UP!
HURRRRR
KA-CHUK

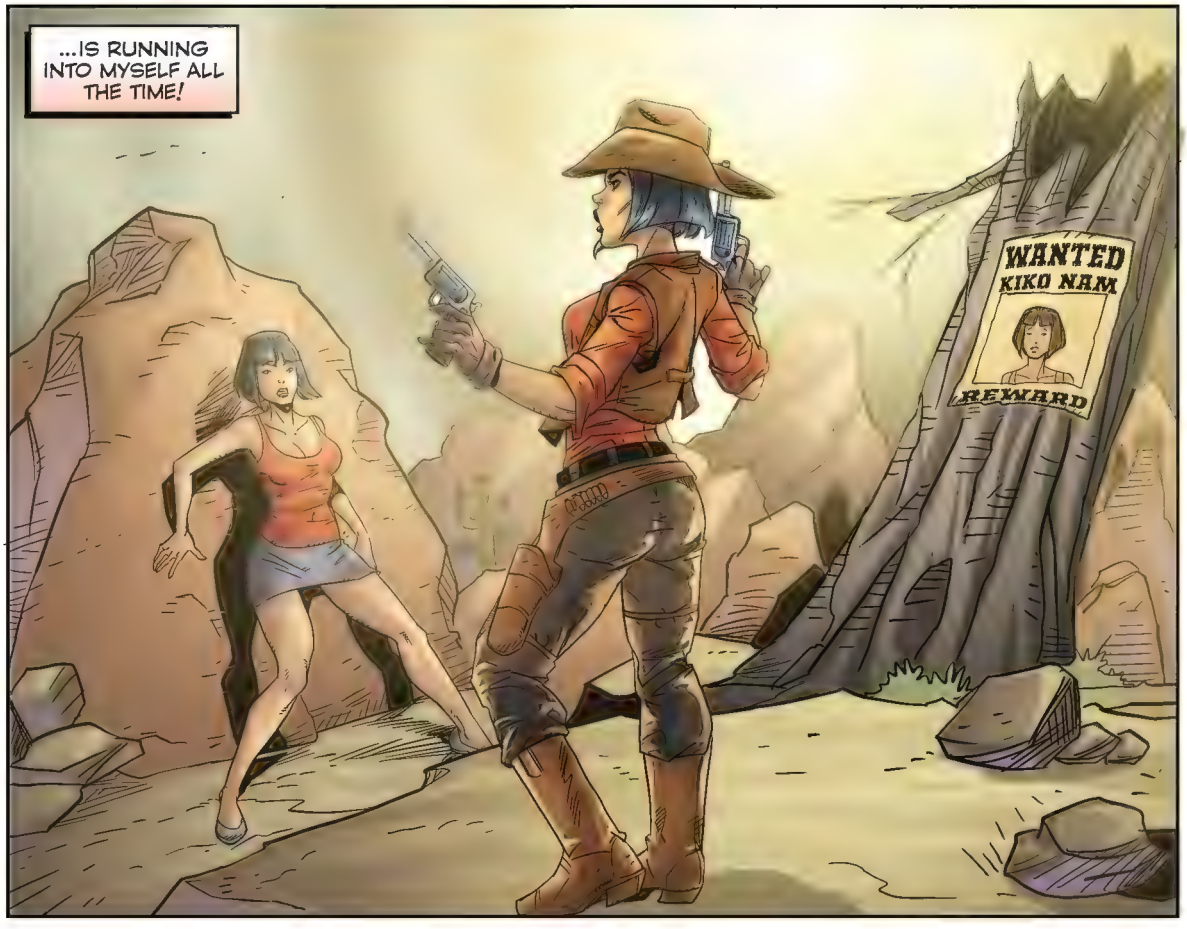
JEN-JANG!

SLICE
KAATU VE... VE-VERATHUL... N-NOTOROS DE... M-M-MORT...

FINISH THE WORDS. NO MATTER WHAT HAPPENS...

SSIB-SAE-KKI GGEO-JYEO!!
E MUNDUS... EX MORTIS!

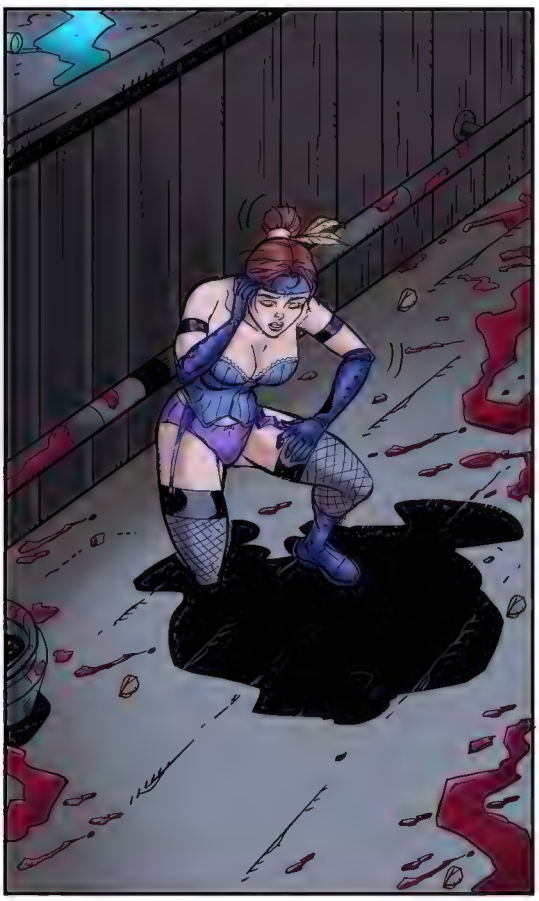
THE WORST THING ABOUT BEING A TIME TRAVELING DEMON HUNTER...
Uhhh...


...IS RUNNING INTO MYSELF ALL THE TIME!
WANTED
KIKO NAM
REWARD

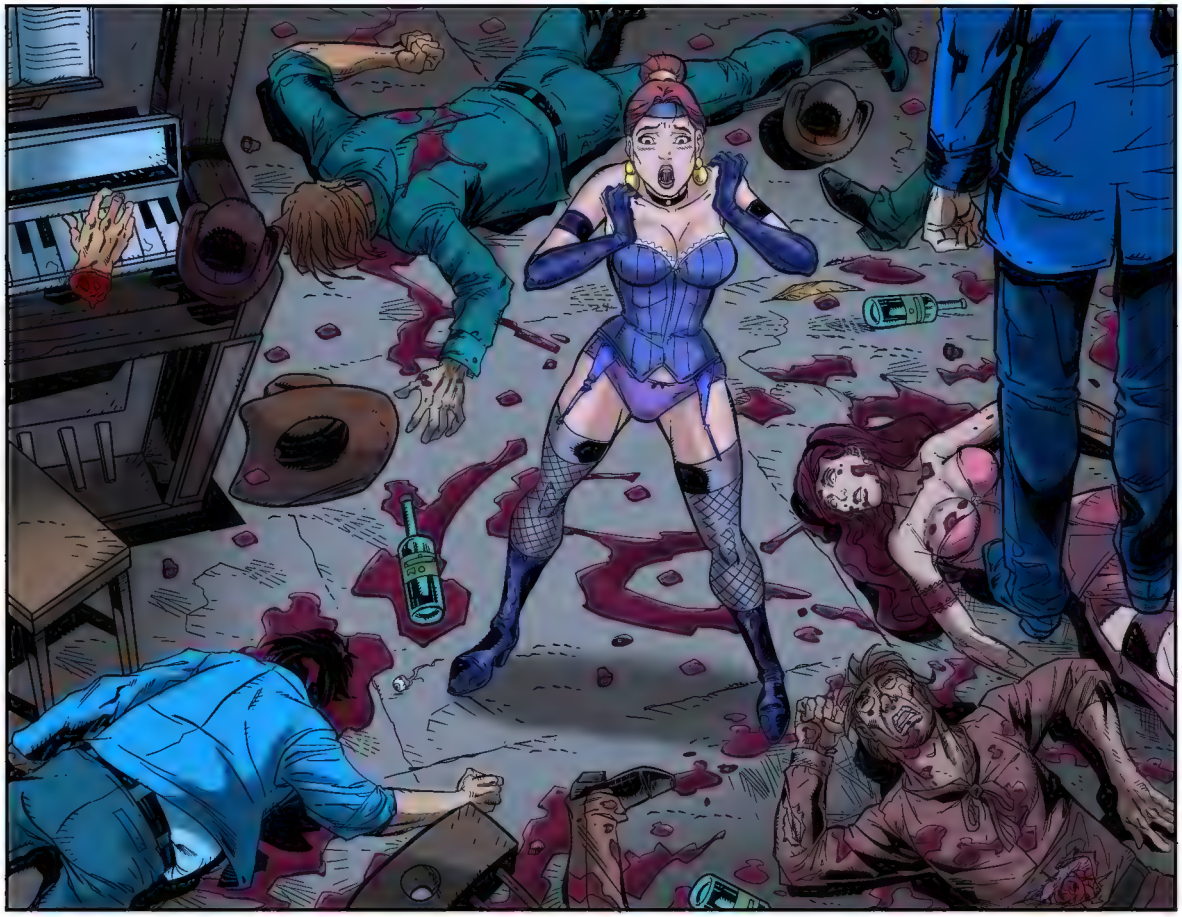
WOLF HOLE, ARIZONA, 1882.
SALOON
SAY YOUR PRAYERS

ASKA VAS NIKTU...
ASKA VAS NATUROM DEMONTO...

SALOON



>gasp!<



EEHHHH...

SHERIFF

HOWDY, LITTLE LADY!
WHAT CAN I DO YOU FOR?

UH...
DON'T MIND THEM. THEY'RE JUST MY BAND OF DANGEROUS OUTLAWS--RICH, BILLY, AND CARLOS.
ANYWAY...
...WE'RE LOOKING FOR A FILTHY BLACK-HEARTED SLIMEBAG WHO SOLD HIS SOUL TO THE DEVIL.
SEEN HIM AROUND?

OH RIGHT, YOU WORK IN A BROTHEL. YOU'VE PROBABLY SEEN A BILLION.
I'VE GOT A LITTLE PRESENT FOR THE SLIMEBAG I'M AFTER.
SOME PIGSTICKER, HUH?

WATCH IT!!
CRASH

BLAM
BLAM
BLAM
BLAM
WARD
WANT

BLAM
AARRGGH!
SHURK!?

WE'LL NEVER FORGET YA, BILLY!
BLAM

WHAT'S YOUR NAME?
M-MADDY...

OKAY, MADDY, MAKE YOURSELF USEFUL.

BLAM

NICE SHOT. I THINK YOU MISSED YOUR CALLING.
MY REGULARS SAY OTHER-WISE.

THEY JUST KEEP COMIN'.
HOW LONG DO YOU THINK WE CAN HOLD 'EM UP, SHERIFF NAM?
CALL ME KIKO. "SHERIFF" WAS THE GUY I GUTTED THIS MORNING.
OF COURSE, HE WAS DEAD AT THE TIME...

...AND TRYING TO CHEW MY NOSE.
WE ONLY HAVE TO SLOW THEM DOWN LONG ENOUGH TO PULL THE HEAD OFF THE SNAKE IN CHARGE...

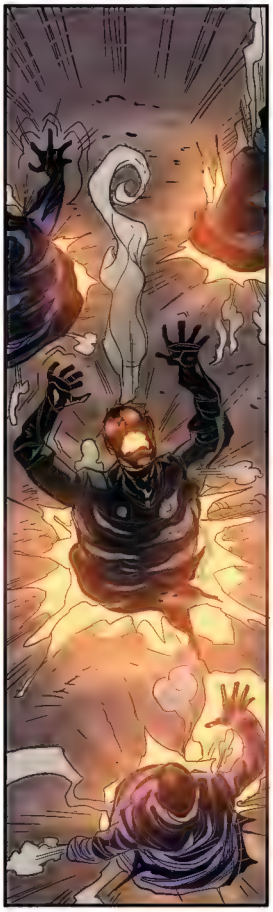
...AND I KNOW WHERE HE'S NESTING.

BLAM BLAM
BLAM BLAM
BLAM BLAM
BLAM BLAM
BLAM BLAM
BLAM

I SAW A BEAST COMING OUT OF THE SEA.
IT HAD TEN HORNS AND SEVEN HEADS, WITH TEN CROWNS ON ITS HORNS...
...AND ON EACH HEAD A BLASPHEMOUS NAME!

THE PEOPLE WORSHIPED THE BEAST AND ASKED,
"WHO IS LIKE THE BEAST?"
"WHO CAN WAGE WAR AGAINST HIM?"

WHAT DOES THAT EVEN MEAN?!
SQUIRT

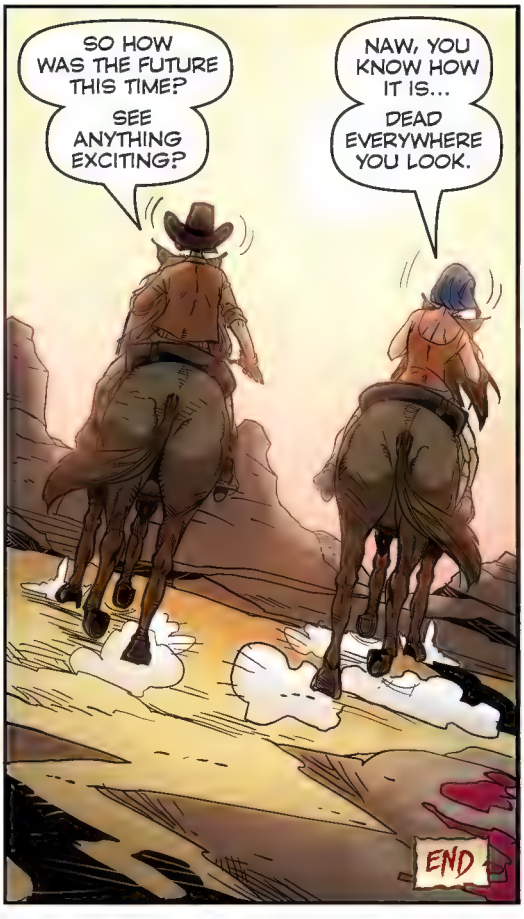


MIND IF I LEAVE YOU IN CHARGE, MADDY? THE JOB SHOULD BE EASY--
--YOU ARE THE ONLY PERSON LEFT IN TOWN.

WOLF HOLE, ARIZONA.
POPULATION: 82 1.
LET'S GIVE THE HORSES A REST.
YOU'RE THE BOSS LADY.
CLICK
I THOUGHT WE WERE A TEAM...
...YOU KNOW, COMPADRES?
SORRY, PATRONA... THE REWARD MONEY IS TOO GOOD THIS TIME.

THOK
THOK

WHY DO I ALWAYS HAVE TO SAVE MY OWN ASS?!
HANG ON, THIS ONE'S STILL KICKING.
BLAM

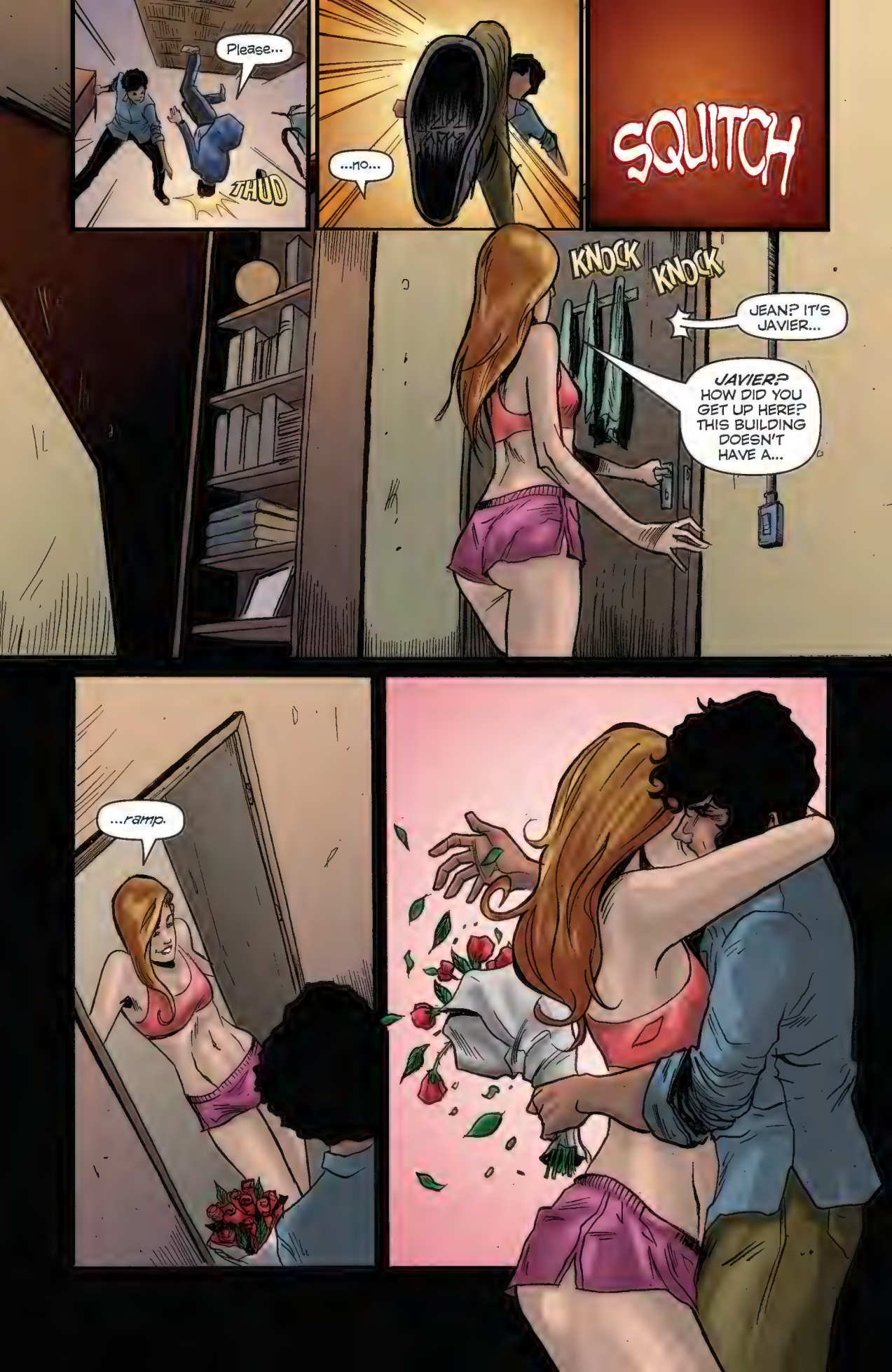

SO HOW WAS THE FUTURE THIS TIME?
SEE ANYTHING EXCITING?
NAW, YOU KNOW HOW IT IS...
DEAD EVERYWHERE YOU LOOK.
END

DEADITE MAN WALKING
GLENDALE UNIVERSITY LIBRARY, RARE BOOKS ROOM.
This could change everything...
DAMN IT!
I'VE GOT IT, PROFESSOR.
Is there anything else I can help you with, Javier?
NOT YET, JEAN...
...BUT HOPEFULLY SOON...

CAMPBELL HALL.
DEAN
CHARLES, YOU'RE BEING *COMPLETELY* UNREASONABLE! WITH JUST A LITTLE *FUNDING*--
FUNDING? FOR ANOTHER SO-CALLED MIRACLE CURE?
JAVIER, I'M NOT TRYING TO BE *UNSYMPATHETIC*--
Huh. You're doing a hell of a job...
--BUT YOU'RE AN ANCIENT-LANGUAGES PROFESSOR, NOT A SCIENTIST. THIS *EX-MOR*--
THE EX-MORTIS.
THE SINGLE GREATEST DISCOVERY ANYONE AT THIS SCHOOL HAS *EVER* MADE.
MAYBE SO, BUT IT SEEMS LIKE EVERY FEW *MONTHS* YOU COME IN HERE WITH ANOTHER "DISCOVERY." YOUR ACCIDENT WAS A LONG TIME AGO...
...DON'T YOU THINK IT'S TIME TO *MOVE ON?*

MAYBE I SHOULDN'T HAVE GOTTEN BEHIND THE WHEEL THAT NIGHT...
...BUT *TWO YEARS* IN THIS CHAIR IS PUNISHMENT ENOUGH FOR HAVING A COUPLE OF GODDAMN *DRINKS*.
EASY TO SAY WHEN YOU'RE NOT *DEAD* FROM THE WAIST DOWN.
MOVE ON?
WITH THAT BOOK, I CAN GET BACK WHAT I LOST...AND *MORE*. IF YOU THINK I'M GIVING THAT UP...
...MAYBE THAT *CHEMICAL SPILL* OF A TOUPÉE HAS FINALLY LEAKED INTO YOUR BRAIN.

THAT NIGHT.
Kanda... Es-trata...Ta-toon... Hazan...Sobar...
PROFESSOR? I'M SORRY, BUT IT'S CLOSING TI--
ACCKKK
...Ear-grets, Gat...Nos-feratos... AMANTOS... KANDA!
KKZZZZZZZ
WHSSSOOOOOO


Please...
THUD
...no...
SQUITCH
KNOCK
KNOCK
JEAN? IT'S JAVIER...
JAVIER? HOW DID YOU GET UP HERE? THIS BUILDING DOESN'T HAVE A...
...ramp.

LATER...
SORRY I CAN'T STAY FOR BREAKFAST, SWEETHEART, BUT I HAVE TO GO SEE THE DEAN.
MAYBE NOW HE'LL BELIEVE WHAT THOSE PAGES CAN DO.
LAST NIGHT WAS REALLY SOMETHING.
I DON'T KNOW WHAT GOT INTO ME, BUT IT WAS INCREDIBLE, RIGHT?
TOO WORN OUT TO TALK?
SMEK
WELL, I'M OFF...
...YOU JUST GET SOME REST.
SLAM

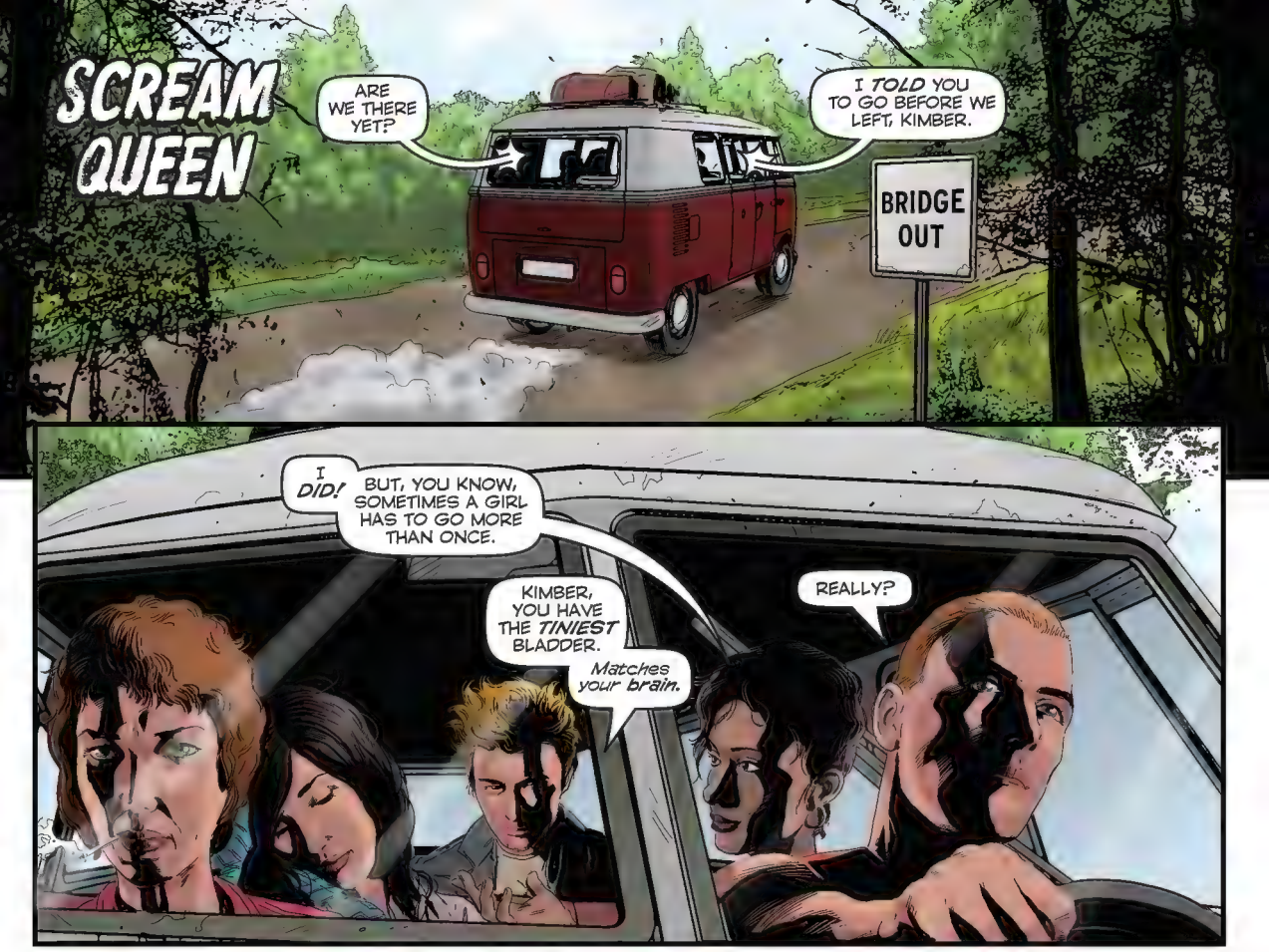
AND THEN MOIRA SAID YOU DIDN'T COME HOME, BUT YOU'RE HERE...
...WALKING?
JAVIER! THANK GOD YOU'RE ALL RIGHT.
WHEN THEY SHOWED ME WHAT WAS LEFT OF YOUR CHAIR, I THOUGHT THE WORST MUST HAVE HAPPENED.
It worked...
PROFESSOR REYES?
I NEED TO ASK YOU SOME QUESTIONS.
OF COURSE, OFFICER. WHATEVER YOU NE--
WHAT?!
HELP!

I CAN'T STOP MY LEGS!
UFF!
NOPE. CAN'T DO IT WITHOUT MY ARMS, CAN YA?
AND I'M NOT LETTING GO. SO YOU MIGHT AS WELL GIVE UP--
OWWWWWWW! GODDAMNIT, THAT HURTS!
WHOA... ARE YOU ALL RIGHT, PROFESSOR?

HEY, DIDN'T YOU USED TO USE A WHEEL-CHAIR?
DON'T... DON'T HELP ME...
GHA!
Not cool, man.
WHAT ARE YOU DOING?!
WE'RE HEADING RIGHT FOR THEM!
PROFESSOR! STOP!
I'M TRYING!
DON'T SHOOT!
DON'T--
CK-CRUNCH!

GLENDALE MORGUE
THIS IS A STRANGE ONE.
CRIPPLED GUY GOES NUTS, MURDERS TWO PEOPLE, THEN KILLS HIMSELF WITH HIS OWN WHEEL-CHAIR.
MIGHT AS WELL START WITH THE BRAIN...
...IT'S NOT LIKE WE'RE GOING TO LEARN ANYTHING FROM THE NECK DOWN.
THE END

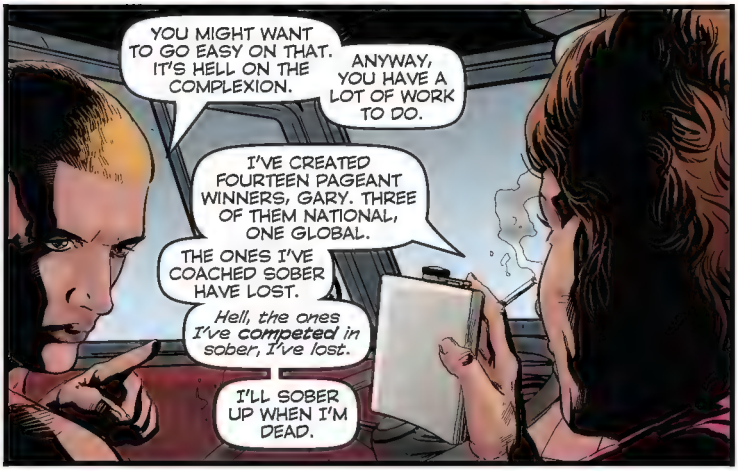
WOW


SCREAM QUEEN
ARE WE THERE YET?
I TOLD YOU TO GO BEFORE WE LEFT, KIMBER.
BRIDGE OUT

I DID!
BUT, YOU KNOW, SOMETIMES A GIRL HAS TO GO MORE THAN ONCE.
KIMBER, YOU HAVE THE TINIEST BLADDER.
Matches your brain.
REALLY?

YOU KNOW WE HAVE TO LIVE TOGETHER IN THIS CABIN FOR TWO WEEKS, RIGHT?
SABLE'S GOT TO BE READY FOR THE MISS GALAXY PAGEANT.
REALLY READY.
HUNH? SOMEBODY CALL ME?
GO BACK TO SLEEP, SABLE.
:KOFF KOFF:
YOU NEED YOUR BEAUTY REST IF YOU'RE GOING TO COMPETE WITH THE HOT GIRLS.

DON'T LISTEN TO HER, BABY. YOU'RE AS PRETTY AS ANY OF THEM.
MAYBE NOT COVER GIRL MATERIAL, BUT STILL, WITH A LITTLE LUCK...
THAT'S WHAT GRANDMOTHER GRAY EAGLE GAVE ME THIS FOR. DREAMCATCHERS KEEP THE BAD STUFF AWAY, AND ONLY LET IN THE GOOD.


YOU MIGHT WANT TO GO EASY ON THAT. IT'S HELL ON THE COMPLEXION.
ANYWAY, YOU HAVE A LOT OF WORK TO DO.
I'VE CREATED FOURTEEN PAGEANT WINNERS, GARY. THREE OF THEM NATIONAL, ONE GLOBAL.
THE ONES I'VE COACHED SOBER HAVE LOST.
Hell, the ones I've competed in sober, I've lost.
I'LL SOBER UP WHEN I'M DEAD.

HERE WE ARE, FOLKS. HOME, SWEET HOME.
IT'S *CUTE!*
WHERE DO WE SLEEP?
IS THAT ALL YOU EVER *THINK* ABOUT?
COURSE NOT. I THINK ABOUT EATING, TOO.
THAT'S A HABIT YOU'RE GOING TO HAVE TO GIVE UP.
THINKING ABOUT EATING?
EATING.
DON'T WORRY, MY *KALE SMOOTHIES* HAVEN'T KILLED ANYBODY YET.
WHAT DOESN'T KILL YOU MAKES YOU *STRONGER*, RIGHT?
DON'T WORRY, SABLE. A FEW DAYS PRACTICE SWALLOWING *THESE* AND YOU'LL BE ABLE TO CHOKE DOWN GARY'S GUNK WITH NO PROBLEM.
IGNORE THEM, CHICKIE. YOU'VE GOT TO FOCUS ON YOUR INTERVIEW TOPIC.
I WAS THINKING MAYBE I COULD TALK ABOUT ALCOHOL ABUSE ON THE RESERVATION.
ERR...THE JUDGES DON'T REALLY LIKE GIRLS WHO SEEM TOO BRAINY.
HOW ABOUT SOMETHING LIKE WORLD PEACE? OR *PUPPIES?*
PUPPIES ARE GOOD.

LATER...
YOU'RE KIDDING.
WHAT?
I LIVED IN SEVEN-INCH SPIKES FOR THREE YEARS. JUST TAKES SOME PRACTICE.
And some killer glutes...
NOT THE SHOES, THAT DRESS. WHAT IS THIS, 1850?
THE BUCKSKIN'S AWESOME, SABLE.
JUST KNOCK OFF A FEW MORE POUNDS AND YOU SHOULD BE ABLE TO SQUEEZE YOUR RUMP INTO IT.
Well, maybe more than a few...
I'LL GET STARTED ON THOSE SMOOTHIES.
WHERE ARE YOU GOING, PAUL?
TO LOOSEN MY THROAT UP. OUTSIDE.
SWALLOWING A LITTLE RAPIER'S NO PROBLEM, BUT YOU HAVE TO WORK UP TO THE BIG ONES.
HUH?
THIS MAKES NO SENSE.
KANDA CANTARI HEMLOSH BARABAK. ZUMULVAN BASHA MOULTON.
THAT'S NOT EVEN...
...ENGLISH!

...DELICIOUS AS ALWAYS, GARY!
That is, if you like the taste of has-been mixed with desperation and old gym socks.
I'LL SHOW YOU DESPERATION, HUMAN. I'LL EVEN ADD IN SOME HUMILIATION AND TERROR, FREE OF CHARGE.
GARY! HELP! PAUL'S GONE CRAZY!
WHIRRRR...
Three eggs, kale, brussel sprouts, a couple of ghost peppers...
WHIRRRR...
SWALLOW THAT, YOU FREAKING PSYCHO!
...DELICIOUS!
:uuuh!:
SQUELCH

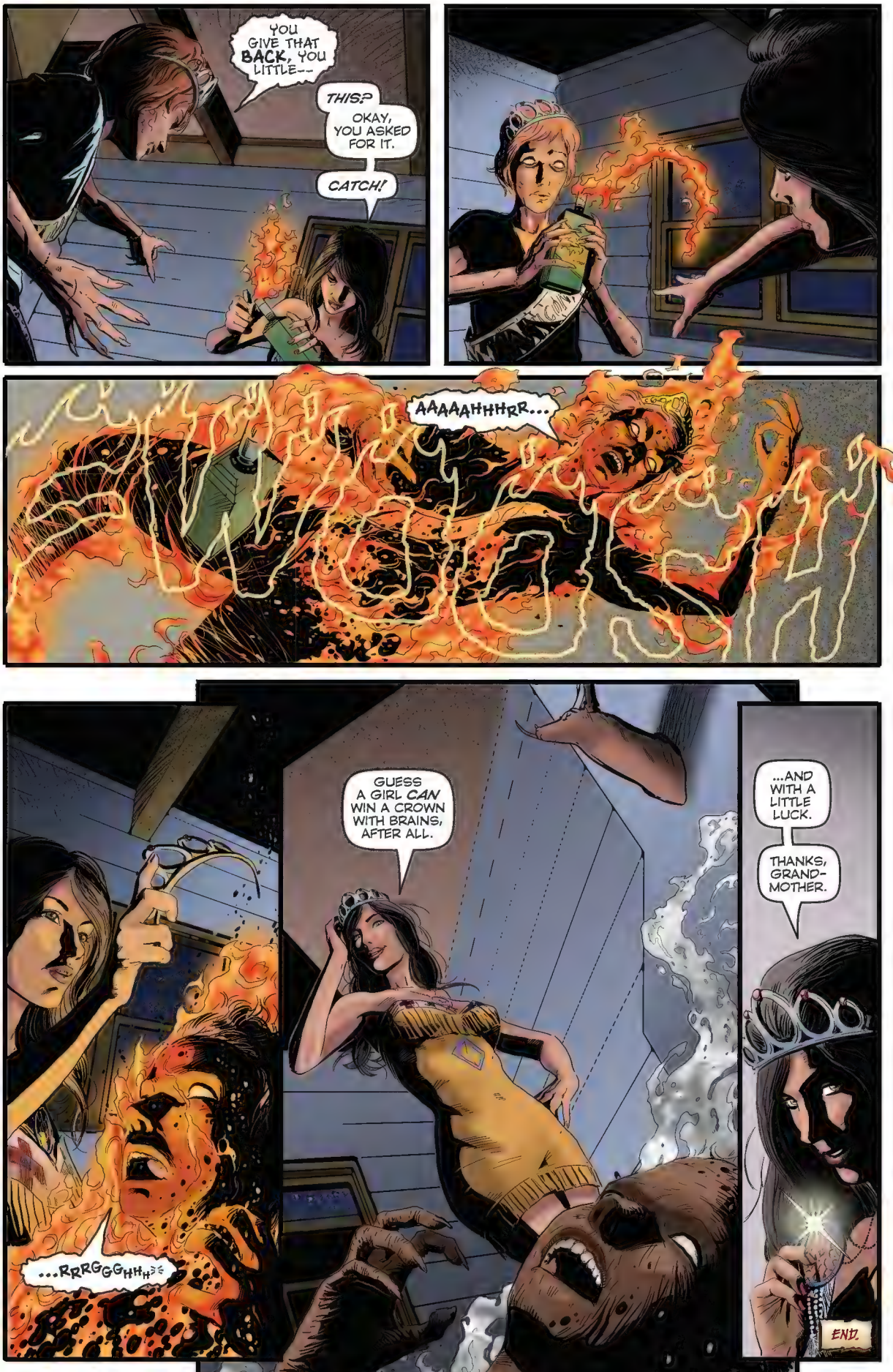
WHAT THE HELL...?
EXACTLY.
LOOK, IF THIS IS ABOUT THE SMOOTHIES, THEY'RE REALLY NOT THAT BAD...
THEY'RE DELICIOUS! BUT NOT NEARLY AS TASTY AS YOUR IMMORTAL SOUL.
AH-AH, YOUNG LADY. I'VE SEEN WHAT HAPPENS WHEN SOMEONE GIVES YOU SOMETHING SHARP.
WHIRRRR...
PLEASE. IT'S NOT LIKE THAT CRAP COULD TASTE ANY WORSE.
WHIR
SKRISH
SHRIP

COME BACK HERE, YOU FAT-ASSED...
...LITTLE...
SMASH
...BI--
I'D RATHER BE A FAT-ASS THAN A DUMBASS.
or a brainless one.
WHAT IN THE NAME OF ALL THAT'S...
...UNHOLY?
HERE WE GO AGAIN...

I CAN MOVE FASTER WITHOUT THESE.
BUT...THOSE CALVES...
HELL'S TOO STYLISH FOR YOU!
I'LL MAKE THAT SACRIFICE.
AGNES'S ROOM!
AGNES!
AG--
oh.
NOW YOU'RE MINE!

GONNA HAVE TO... *snggguh* GET THAT CLEANED BEFORE THE BIG NIGHT.
NO ONE'S EVER WON A TIARA...*snork* WITH BRAINS...IN HER HEAD OR ON HER GOWN.
SPLURCH
AAAARGGH!
WHEW! GLAD THAT'S OVER.
NOT SO FAST, CHICKIE!

SPLAK
EH. NEEDS SALT.
THAT MIGHT HAVE WORKED ON NAOMI CAMPBELL THERE...
...BUT IT'S GOING TO TAKE A LOT MORE THAN A CHICKIE IN COUNTERFEIT JIMMY CHOOS AND AN OFF-THE-RACK DRESS TO BEAT ME.
These are knockoffs? Figures.
GOOD RIDDANCE TO BAD RUBBISH.
WHOOSH
SPEAKING OF TRASH...
PUT THAT DOWN!
OOPS. GUESS YOU SHOULD HAVE BEEN A LITTLE MORE SPECIFIC.


YOU GIVE THAT BACK, YOU LITTLE--
THIS?
OKAY, YOU ASKED FOR IT.
CATCH!
AAAAAHHHRR...
...RRRGGGHHH
GUESS A GIRL CAN WIN A CROWN WITH BRAINS, AFTER ALL.
...AND WITH A LITTLE LUCK.
THANKS, GRANDMOTHER.
END.

SUDAN. THE NILE VALLEY. 1942.
DAS BOOK
Dearest, Birgitta. I have arrived safely in Sudan. I wish I could say it is beautiful here. It is not.
I am to meet with a German official named Colonel von Donnersmarck. I'm told he is a reputable man—for a Nazi.
If we didn't need the money so badly, I am not sure I would have chosen this assignment.
WE ARE ON A TIGHT SCHEDULE, MONSIEUR DEJARDINE...
...THE FUHRER IS EXPECTING AN END TO ALL THIS...PLAYING IN THE DIRT.
JUST A MOMENT, COLONEL...
...I THINK I HAVE IT.
THIS IS RAKA-URUK.
I am not at liberty to tell you what we are searching for, but you should know that if we are successful, this should change the course of our lives, and for the better.
NOT A PHARAOH? YOU PROMISED--
UGH. THAT'S THE PROBLEM WITH YOU NAZIS.
YOU SEE EVERYTHING AS BLACK AND WHITE. NO ROOM FOR NUANCE.
TRUST ME. THIS IS WHAT THE FUHRER IS LOOKING FOR.

I fear there is no romance in what the Nazis are trying to achieve here. My dealings with them have been cold. Clinical.
I despise this above all things. This passionless indifference.
THE PAGES, MONSIEUR, SE IL VOUS PLAIT.
YOU THINK YOU CAN RUN THE WORLD THIS WAY?
DO YOU EVEN KNOW WHAT THIS IS? DO YOU THINK YOU CAN JUST BRING THEM BACK TO YOUR BELOVED FUHRER AND HE WILL KNOW WHAT THEY MEAN?
NO. I'M SORRY. I MUST CONTINUE ON TO BERLIN AND SEE THIS THROUGH.
YOUR DEDICATION HAS BEEN NOTED--AS HAVE YOUR LESS THAN SYMPATHETIC OPINIONS ABOUT THE REICH.
SHOOT HIM.

Hitler's only passion seems to be the extermination of Jews from Europe.
BRATATATATATATAT
BRATATATATATATAT
Or anyone else that stands in their way.
BRATATATATATATAT
These thoughts, while morose, manage to fill up my time here. When I am not thinking of you, of course...

There is an old and dark power in what we're after here. I can feel it all around me.
THAT'S THAT, THEN...
I'm not usually taken in by otherworldy hocum and superstition. Yet, there is something here at the dig site.
Something ominous and powerful.
HMM?
WATCH OUT!!
KRAAAASH

WE'RE TRAPPED! WHAT ARE WE GOING TO DO?!
SHUT YOUR MOUTH, YOU COWARD, OR I'LL SHOOT YOU MYSELF!
Still. I must be brave. For you. For us.
HERR COLONEL! LOOK! WE'RE SAVED!
SEE? WHAT DID I TELL YOU?
There may be dark times ahead. I say this not to frighten you.
I say it simply because it is true.
-BRAAANNGGGHHHUUUOORRRGGGG
Your father has made his feelings about our proposed marriage plans painfully clear. What was it he said?
"The dead would rise" before he let me marry you.

HRRRRHUUUUNNNKKKA
People like your father will never understand people like us. They are like soulless automatons.
Doing what they are told. Never questioning the status quo.

Scheisse...
Sure, he has money and power, but what good is that to men like him?
It can't save them from themselves.
BRATATATATATATATAT
BRATATATATATATATAT
BRATATATATATATATAT
BRATATATATATATATAT
BRATATATATATATATAT

KEEP FIGHTING OR I'LL HAVE YOU SHOT!
ARRRGH!
NEIN!
I have digressed, my love. It is late here and I fear I have consumed too much wine.
DAMN YOU!

YOU CAN'T KILL ME. YOU CAN'T!

I shall leave it there for now.
Just know that I love you.
I miss you.
And I pray I will see you again soon.
Your forever and always,
Mattieu Dejardine.
FIN.

ᔕᗰᑌᗪᘉᗩᖇᗰᗩᔕ

MY NAME IS PROFESSOR RAYMOND KNOWBY AND MY SOUL IS DAMNED. I KNOW THIS NOW, BUT WAS TOO STUBBORN TO SEE IT.
COME TO SWEET HENRIETTA, MY LOVE...
I MEDDLED WITH THINGS I SHOULDN'T HAVE. I THOUGHT I WAS STRONGER THAN MY ANTHROPOLOGICAL FINDS.
I WAS WRONG.
...GIVE US A KISS...

MY WIFE AND I HAD RETREATED TO A REMOTE CABIN TO TRANSLATE AN ANCIENT BOOK OF THE DEAD.
TRANSLATING WAS ONE THING...
ARE YOU COMING TO BED, HONEY?
IN A MOMENT, DEAR. I JUST WANT TO PLAY BACK SOME OF MY TRANSLATIONS.
IT WAS WHEN I GAVE VOICE TO IT THAT ALL THE TROUBLED STARTED.
C'AN DA, ESTRATA, MONTOSE, NOS-FERTUS CA'N DA...
THINGS CHANGED FOREVER—AND FOR THE WORSE.
URRRRGGGGGGGHHH
HENRIETTA? ARE YOU...?

RECITING FROM THAT ANCIENT BOOK ALLOWED A DEMON TO POSSESS MY WIFE. IT TOOK HER FROM ME.
WHAT'S WRONG, LOVER?
I WAS AT ODDS WITH MYSELF. WITH WHAT I KNEW WAS TRUE AND WHAT I DESPERATELY WANTED TO BELIEVE.
LET ME IN. YOU'VE GIVEN US LIFE!
STAY BACK!
I'VE GOT A GUN!
HENRIETTA?! HONEY, I KNOW YOU'RE IN THERE SOMEWHERE.
YOU CAN STOP THIS. YOU CAN TAKE BACK CONTROL.
I DON'T WANT CONTROL.
I WANT YOUR SSOOuuuL!
ACK—!
GOD FORGIVE ME. I WAS DAMNED.

THIS — THING, IT HAD ME IN ITS GRIP. I SAID THE ONLY THING THAT CAME TO MIND. IT SEEMS SILLY NOW.
DAMMIT, HENRIETTA, IT'S ME!
LOVER, YOUR SOUL SMELLS SO FRESH!
IT'S RAYMOND!
I WAS TRYING TO REASON WITH THE BEAST.
RAYMOND?
WHAT'S — WHAT'S HAPPENING TO ME?
IT'S OKAY, HONEY. EVERYTHING IS FINE NOW.
THERE, THERE, PET...
BUT I KNEW THINGS WERE NOT FINE. I KNEW THIS THING INSIDE HER WOULDN'T GIVE UP SO EASILY.

I HAD TO DO IT. GOD FORGIVE ME, IT HAD TO BE DONE.
I LOV—
BLAM
HONEY?
I'M SO TIRED ALL OF A SUDDEN.
I LOVE YOU...
BWAHAHAHAHA!
WE LIVE! WE LIVE!
SHUT YOUR MOUTH, DEMON!

IT WAS THE ONLY WAY TO FREE HER BODY OF THE DARK SPIRIT.
YOUR SOUL IS NOT SAFE— ARRKH!
I HAD TO STAB HER WITH THE KANDARIAN DAGGER.
IT WOULD NOT, HOWEVER, BRING HER BACK.
THE ONLY THING LEFT FOR ME NOW IS TO WAIT FOR IT TO TAKE ME.
AND TAKE ME, IT WOULD.
I'M SO SORRY, ANNIE.